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THE CALL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

"Unity may be theoretically a desirable ideal in Europe and America, but it is vital to the life of the Church in the mission field. The divisions of Christendom may be a source of weakness in Christian countries, but in non-Christian lands they are a sin and a scandal."

THE RIGHT REV. V. S. AZARIAH,
Bishop of Dornakal, at Lausanne.

THE CALL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

THE CHALLENGE OF A WORLD SITUATION

A VOLUME OF ESSAYS CONTRIBUTED
AT THE REQUEST OF THE ANGLICAN
EVANGELICAL GROUP MOVEMENT

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PREFACE

THE present volume of essays has been written in the light of a rapidly developing situation overseas and a growing sense of the urgency for a close union of Christian forces, if the possibilities of the situation are to be met. It will be remembered that the need for unity was strongly voiced by the missionary delegates both at the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne in 1927 and at the enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council at Jerusalem in 1928. The proposals for a united Church in South India are to be considered at the forthcoming Lambeth Conference, and will focus this demand for unity. These proposals provide the immediate occasion for the publication of this book. The S.I.U.C. scheme is arousing not only interest in the Church at home, but also a strong division of opinion. Church people are tending to range themselves over the matter into the two camps of Catholic and Protestant. But it should be emphatically stated that the South India Church has no wish to ally itself with any party in the Anglican Church. It is not approaching the problem from the party point of view at all, but from the point of view of what is for the best interests of the Kingdom of God. We at home should also try to take as wide and comprehensive a view as possible of these proposals, asking whether their adoption will be for the ultimate good of

the Church, and will promote the extension of Christ's cause which the Church exists, and exists only, to serve. The adoption of these proposals means the sacrifice on both sides of cherished convictions. That the Free Churches of South India should be willing to accept episcopacy is a real concession on their part. A real concession also is involved in the acceptance of the interim policy set out in the scheme by the Catholic school in the Church. The goal is one united Church in the future, all of whose ministers shall be ministers of the one Church. For the sake of reaching that goal, and so achieving the unity which is so sorely needed if the Church is to accomplish its task and rise to the vast possibilities of the present situation, there must be self-sacrifice all round. We plead for a reconsideration of our differences in the light of this new overseas situation which God has in His providence brought about.

It should, however, be remembered that the uniting Churches in South India have been governed, not so much by the need for concessions, as by the desire to preserve all that is true in the three scriptural elements of Episcopacy, Presbyterianism and Congregationalism with a view to the enrichment of the ever-growing Catholic Church. We do not believe that in the proposals for union in South India, as now drafted, there has been any sacrifice of essential elements which would jeopardise the greater union at some future date with the older Churches of Rome and the East.

Readers of the essays should keep constantly in mind the situation overseas and the great possibilities of development which await the Church not only in India, but also in China, Persia and elsewhere, because each

essayist has written with his eye upon this promising future.

The volume is, of course, written from a definite theological and ecclesiastical standpoint, but its writers have tried to avoid showing any narrow, partisan spirit. They have their convictions, and have freely expressed them; but they recognise that some of their fellow-Churchmen hold different views. If other views are criticised or opposed it is in no spirit of contempt or disdain. Colourless writing on the question of reunion is impossible: the issues at stake are too vital; the principles involved are too fundamental. But all our theological and ecclesiastical differences can surely take a new colour and a new proportion when viewed against the larger background of God's redemptive purpose for mankind.

Several of the essays deal with problems of a permanent interest in the life of the English Church. Each essayist is responsible only for the opinions expressed in his own essay.

V. F. S.
G. H. H.

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I

THE PRESENT SITUATION

By The Rev. G. H. Harris, M.A., Editorial Secretary, C.M.S.

THE vast majority of the people who compose the Churches at home are not yet awake to the vital need for Christian unity. The unification of the divided Christian forces throughout the world is not for them a matter of prime concern. Questions of a domestic nature loom far larger than does the future of Christianity. Yet the future of Christianity and the unity of the Church form one inseparable problem.

In spite of the fact that the subject of " reunion " is in the air and that the last few years have witnessed the drawing together of various Churches of kindred order, in our own country and elsewhere, it is true to say that amongst the members of the separated Churches there is no widespread desire or readiness to unite. Although something like a professional trades-unionism may render some clergy and ministers unwilling to face the prospects for themselves resulting from a " merger " of the Churches, it is not true to say that on the whole the laity desire unity and the clergy are the obstacle in the way. The reverse is probably true. In many centres there has been developing for some time a fellowship between the ministers of various Churches which has not been paralleled in the case of

their congregations. There are, of course, outstanding exceptions.

If we honestly face the facts, we must be aware that the average Church of England congregation has no desire for very close contact with the members of the Presbyterian or Congregational Church along the road. And the Free Church congregation is usually not at all prepared to welcome any corporate act of fellowship with the Church of England folk. We are content that things should go on as they are. There is a general complacency in regard to the divided state of the Christian forces in the homeland, and this deadly condition is itself due to the long-standing nature of our divisions.

That the evils of Christian disunion are not more clearly seen and that there is no insatiable urge towards unity among Christian folk show how chronic is the case. Occasionally we mention before God "our unhappy divisions." We do not realise that these divisions are sinful, and that the guilt of them rests heavily upon us. We forget that because of the divided state of the Church the work of the Kingdom of God is compelled to go slow.

Largely as the result of the long-standing disunion in which we acquiesce we have almost lost the sense of Christian fellowship. Because we do not yet want that fellowship with all other Christians without distinction, we do not possess it even within our own Churches. The full fellowship of the Spirit, which was the outstanding gift of Pentecost, is certainly not prominent among the marks of the Christian Church to-day. This transcending experience, which is the Spirit's highest gift, is a corporate gift: it cannot be appropriated in its

fulness by units that desire to perpetuate their own exclusiveness.

The life of the Church is the life of a body, not of numerous separated cells. Hence it is natural that, things being what they are, lack of life should be characteristic of the Churches in their present state. It seems to be generally acknowledged that listlessness, spiritual powerlessness, darkness of vision, are obvious symptoms of the Church's condition at the present time. To seek for ways of renewal is an imperative task. But can the true way of renewal be found by a unit for itself? May not spiritual renewal (like the other manifold gifts of the Spirit) tarry until the Churches seek it together, for each other, for the whole Church, for the world?

The utterly inadequate conceptions of the Church of God which satisfy the minds of the majority to-day, are inevitably the best that can be current so long as there is no vision of world-wide Christian unity as the supreme aim. What sort of definition of the Church would the ordinary member of a Christian congregation in England give to-day? For many the Church is the building which bears the name of St. Peter or the Holy Trinity. Or it is "our denomination." Or again, it is a social-religious club for a certain proportion of residents in the parish or district. Even the remarks of Church leaders often seem to betray the fact that their conception of the Church is dominated by the past, or by the continent of Europe, or by something which is within the limits of things now seen. The divisions of Christendom may not be the only cause of this palpable ignorance, but they are undoubtedly the main cause.

It follows that without the sense of power, without the vision of the Church as the world-wide fellowship of the friends of Jesus Christ, the purpose for which the Church is thought to exist cannot but be correspondingly defective. For the most part, the Churches are dissipating their energies in maintaining their own institutional life. The organisations of the parish, or district, absorb a wholly disproportionate amount of the parish priest's time. He and his fellow-workers are unremittingly engaged in tending the machinery which serves the parish. If it be a large town, numerous other Churches are busily engaged in the same pursuits. Might not a visitor from Mars to our land be pardoned if he concluded that the supreme aim of the Christian forces was something less and other than the enthronement of Christ as King in every realm of thought and life?

The comparative failure of the World Call movement is one of the most serious things that has happened within the Church of England for a century. The movement has been by no means a complete failure. It has already accomplished a considerable amount of valuable exploratory and constructive work. But it has so far failed to elicit from the members of the Church of England either the men and women, or the money, necessary for the maintenance and extension of that comparatively small share in the work of the Kingdom of God overseas which is the responsibility of our own branch of the Church.[1] The World Call movement has failed in its first practical objective, not

[1] The entire Anglican Communion is responsible for about one-seventh of the overseas work being undertaken by the Reformed Churches.

for lack of vision or devoted support on the part of many of the clergy and the laity, but because of the deep-seated inertia of the Church as a whole.

As a Church we do not exist for evangelisation. What is the goal towards which the Church of England is working? Are we conscious of possessing a goal? All the evils of disunion, party strife within our own Church, as well as our separation from the other Churches around us, combine in producing the absence of evangelistic consciousness or dynamic. Evangelism is a word with which many are not happy. Like "missionary," it has come to mean something out of the main stream of Church and parochial life. It is something which must be handled carefully by a council appointed for the purpose. Evangelism does not concern the average congregation or its individual members. Perhaps we need a new word. But a new word will not of itself effect much. We need a new God-given conviction that the Christian Church is meant to be a fellowship of those who, throughout the world and in every branch of thought and activity, are seeking to extend the kingship of Christ. If evangelism thus understood were the goal of the Churches, the sinfulness of division would be patent, and we should be drawn together for the better accomplishment of our one work. As we turn away from merely local and domestic Church interests to the nature and work of the Church in the world, the way and will to unity become clearer, and the desire for union grows.

II

And so it follows, quite naturally, that for a considerable period, especially since the World Missionary

Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, the unification of the Christian forces has increasingly been the concern of those who are engaged in missionary enterprise. It is from missionary leaders of the Churches that the clearest call to unity and united advance has come. The World Conference on Faith and Order is not a body whose aim is speedily to bring about the actual unity of the Churches; but at its meeting at Lausanne in 1927 the delegates from the Church in non-Christian lands repeated the solemn call to unity which had been uttered at Edinburgh seventeen years before, with an emphasis and urgency which the developed situation required.

The International Missionary Council at its enlarged meeting at Jerusalem in 1928 did not assemble for the purpose of considering Christian unity. It met to confer on "The Christian Life and Message in relation to Non-Christian Systems." Yet because the subject of the Meeting was the primary question confronting Christianity, the crippling results of disunion were seen as a spectre dominating the background of every proposal for effective advance. Christian unity was the one great practical question which emerged from this conference, in which the native leaders of the younger Churches were present for the first time in representative strength. Moreover, in the call to unity which was adopted by the Meeting, representing as it did fifty nations and almost all the reformed Churches of the world, the authentic voice of the younger Churches of Christendom is heard:

> "It is fully recognised that it is not the function of the International Missionary Council to pro-

nounce upon questions of ecclesiastical polity. At the same time, the Council is only performing an inescapable duty when it appeals to the older Churches to adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the longings expressed by the younger Churches for a more rapid advance in Christian reunion.

"We appeal also to the older Churches to encourage and support the younger Churches when, in facing the challenging task of evangelising the non-Christian world, they take steps, according to their ability, to solve what perhaps is the greatest problem of the Universal Church of Christ.[1]

This appeal, drawn up with great deliberation, deserves the most careful study. It reflects the mind of the younger Churches on Christian unity. Its message is *unity for evangelisation*. It also indicates the right to act which the younger Churches are conscious is theirs within the freedom which the Spirit gives. At the same time, it expresses the keen desire that the older Churches will at least be actively sympathetic, as they realise the stupendous task which faces the little Churches in Africa and the East.

Christian unity is, in fact, a missionary subject, a missionary necessity. The desire for unity in the interests of the Kingdom of God is a sure touchstone to evangelistic zeal: it is also the sign of a really catholic conception of the Church. The concern of missionary-hearted Churches and groups for Christian unity is, therefore, both natural and inevitable. But the subject of unity is generally approached from a different angle. Most of the discussions on "reunion" which have taken place in the last ten or fifteen years

[1] *Jerusalem Meeting Report*, Vol. 3, pp. 215–16.

have been mainly academic. Conferences have met, discussions have taken place, resolutions and findings have been drawn up, without apparently any account having been taken of the existence and future of the great Churches of to-morrow. The range of these discussions has, as a rule, been confined to the older Churches in the West, and unity has been thought of as something which chiefly concerns the well-being of the Church. This is not the mind of Christ Who prayed that His followers might be one, that the world might believe. The younger Churches, whose only hope of existence depends upon active witness in the face of the forces and majorities which oppose them, have taken as their authority and guide the mind of Christ. At home Church History has generally been taught in ways which suggest that the golden age of the Church lies somewhere in the past, and that the Christian unity to be desired is that which will most nearly restore Church polity as it existed prior to the tenth century. We have had "definite Church teaching" in abundance; but it has been sectarian in kind and local in its range. Hence the ordinary member of the Church of England is not to be blamed too severely if he has no clear notions as to the Church of the future, or of the potential greatness of the component parts of the Church beyond the seas.

Christianity is still in its infancy. Mr. F. R. Barry has made use of an apt illustration of this fact:— "Christianity . . . is just emerging from the pupa-stage in which it has been cocooned in the West, spreading its wings to take the rising sun as a truly world-wide universal religion. New Christian nations are being born in Asia, Africa, and the islands of the

sea. It seems to us impossible to argue that what has been the safeguard and the sacrament of Catholic unity in these countries which have sprung from Græco-Roman inheritance is necessarily the only or final form in which the living spirit of the Church can find expression in the coming time. Catholicity is, after all, a future ideal more than a past fact." [1] Catholicity is not an unchangeable formula inherited from the medieval Church by which the aspirations of the younger Churches must be tested and restrained. There is as yet no really Catholic Church. The discoveries and developments of the past century are potent for good and ill; but they have done much to render possible a really Catholic Church for the first time in Christian history. The complete discovery of the world, improved communications, the one tide of human hopes, ideas and ideals which floods the shore of both hemispheres—all are available for the building of the universal Church. The Catholic Church is the goal set before us: it is the corporate ideal of world-wide evangelism; but we in our day can sing the prophetic words of the Te Deum: "The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee . . ." with a fuller realisation than any former age has possessed.

A unique fact about our own time is that it is the age of the younger Churches. For the first time the whole ground plan of a Catholic Church can be seen throughout the world. In many countries its walls and towers are uprising. Already we can see something of the new glories which other races are to bring into the one Church of God; new discoveries of the truth as it is

[1] See *The Guardian*, July 12, 1929, p. 571.

in Jesus, new ways of worship, new application of Christian standards to everyday life, fresh gifts and graces belonging to other racial groups for the enrichment of Christianity. Within the Catholic Church that is now being built the older Churches of Christendom have their place. It is not a large place in the fabric; and, as in the case of many of our most beautiful cathedrals, later additions to the structure may well follow other types and reflect the ideas and experience of other ages and other peoples.

The younger Churches of the world are in their creative period. There has been in the last two decades a rapid increase of Church-consciousness among the Christian groups in the mission field. With this consciousness is coming the determination to achieve unity for many urgent reasons.

Owing to the divisions within the Christian Church, Christianity has been taken overseas by numerous Churches, societies, and sects. At the present time some 120 distinct Christian organisations, many of them mutually exclusive, are endeavouring to present some form of Christianity to China. In many instances, not only in China, but throughout the whole foreign field, all sorts of peculiar tenets and extravagances, from Seventh Day Adventism to prohibition, are in the forefront of the programmes of some of these agencies. In India some 158 different bodies are at work, and about 134 in Africa. All the divisions of Western Christendom, all the half faiths that claim to be Christian, have been transplanted to foreign soil. Some sort of comity has more recently been followed with regard to spheres of activities, but the results have been appalling. Apart from the fact that in some areas

various missions compete side by side for converts, it happens frequently in the case of "single-society spheres," that Christian converts find themselves separated by questions of Western origin from their fellow Christians in another area a few miles away. Not rarely the bitter antagonism, the mutual fear and distrust of Churches in the West has appeared in the mission field also. That in spite of what has happened overseas in the last hundred years Christianity has made such headway as it has done, may be taken as proof of its supernatural character and the essential sameness of Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day and for ever.

For some time native Christians uncomplainingly suffered themselves to acquire a brand of Christianity dependent solely upon the geographical distribution and delimitation of the foreign bodies active in their land. They were content to be members of foreign "missions." But such a contentment is rapidly passing. With the coming of education, the spread of knowledge, and with first-hand study of the New Testament, native Christians have realised their freedom and their destiny in Christ. They are able to distinguish between Christianity and "Catholicism," between European overlays and the underlying Truth, between the Churches and Christ Himself. Jesus was of Asiatic stock, and those who are His kin are quick to discern the true from the false in the presentation of Christianity which they have received.

The disunited condition of the Church shocks those who are recapturing afresh from the Source the fellowship of the Spirit. Native Christians desire and intend to have fellowship with each other, in spite of the attempt of groups of foreign Christians to keep them

apart. We at home are so case-hardened that we cannot understand the impatience of, say, an Indian Christian in the face of the sub-divisions of the Church in his land. We certainly cannot readily appreciate the difference that his acceptance of Christ makes to the whole of his life. Two illustrations given by Indian Christians will serve to make the position clear. First as to the difference which Christianity makes. Father Nehemiah Goreh says: "The difference between a Hindu who worships a cow and an Indian Christian who has ceased to do so is so great that any theological differences there may be between Indian Christians make no impression upon us." [1] Bishop Azariah, speaking at the Lausanne Conference, showed how great is the scandal of the divided Church in the case of those for whom the acceptance of Christ means social ostracism. "In the non-Christian world . . . the Church's message . . . united in so far as it speaks of the Kingdom of God, realised in Jesus Christ, loses its distinctness when we pass on to ask the convert to separate himself from his past fellowship and enter the fellowship of Jesus Christ. We have no united answer to the questions: Should a man join the Church, and, if so, what Church? Should he be baptised, and, if so, by what baptism? India has a great admiration for Christ, but we fail to carry it further, because over against the anti-Christian divisions of caste we have no true Christian unity into which the Christian can pass." [2]

It is on this sort of situation that Bishop Palmer comments: "The more thoughtful know that division

[1] Quoted by Bishop Palmer in *The Christian Task in India*, p. 256.
[2] *Faith and Order*, p. 103.

has for centuries been the ruin of their own country; and the cruellest divisions are the result of caste. They dread the possibility of different Christian Churches becoming caste-Churches." And with words which are true at least of the younger native Church leaders throughout many parts of Africa and the Far East as well as in India, he continues: "They are indignant when they reflect that the divisions in which they find themselves imprisoned had their origin in the controversies of foreigners in distant lands, in which they had no part and have no interest." [1] It is doubtful if any convincing reasons were forthcoming for the Chinese Christian student who asked a missionary: "Why should I be a member of the Dutch Reformed Church in China?"

The academic approach to the unity question is impossible for the younger Churches, for two main reasons. If they are strong and healthy they are conscious that they are Christian missions to all that is not Christian in the vast nations and cultures in which they are set. Their sole task is evangelisation. They are "militant," not "established" Churches. Also, they are fighting for Christ and their own existence in Him against the call of age-long religions, with precedents, traditions, customs, affecting every part of the daily lives of men. They are assailed, too, by reformed types of the old religions, which, taking certain aspects of Christianity, combine them with those elements of the old religion which have the most widespread and tenacious appeal.

The leaders of the younger Churches are conversant with the tortuous and barren discussions upon reunion

[1] *The Christian Task in India*, p. 256.

which reflect the academic approach to the Church's outstanding problem. They are fully aware of the vital weaknesses which render even venerable theories untenable. They know, for example, that there is no type of ministry in the Christian Church which carries a universal authority; and therefore they rightly decline to accept any single form as if it possessed such an authority. The present willingness of many of the younger Churches to accept the three historic orders in the interests of larger unity will be touched on below. Some words of Dr. Headlam crystallise the opinions which native Church leaders have arrived at independently. " I do not think that it is possible for any one Church to go to any other and say: ' Our Orders are valid, yours are not.' It is not possible for them to say: ' We have the succession, you have not.' The only full and complete Orders would be those given in a united Church, and because the Church is divided, therefore all orders are irregular and no succession is perfect." [1]

III

The movements towards unity in China, Persia and India are dealt with in later essays. These movements are symptomatic of the rising tide of Christian unity in other parts of the world. For example, several intermission conferences are now meeting from time to time in West Africa. In an address to the synod of the Church in the diocese of Lagos recently, the veteran African Bishop Oluwole said: " Are we doing anything in the Church of West Africa for unity? Our dear

[1] *Faith and Order*, p. 333.

English missionaries will not misunderstand me when I say that I particularly address the question to my countrymen. It is more our question than that of the missionaries. The Church which, by God's grace, they have planted in this land is for us and our children. If we are persuaded that division does not make for strength, but weakness, if we are persuaded that it does not make for progress, let us set our face against it, and as far as it exists at present, let us strive to heal it."

The existence and growing effectiveness of the twenty-six National Christian Councils in all parts of the world, composed of representatives of all the greater Reformed Churches including in most cases the Anglican Communion, are steadily working towards unity between these bodies. The common facing of the tasks which confront Christianity, the fellowship received and shared in and through this co-operative work, alike kindle the desire and set clear the need for something more than loose federation. In the majority of these unity movements the Church of England, in spite of the smallness of its share, can play a most important part in regard to the ultimate union of Christendom. Alone amongst the Churches concerned our Church has a good claim to possess the three historic orders which, so far as we can see, provide the most likely basis for the ultimate organic union of the older as well as the younger Churches.

At the present time there is a remarkable readiness on the part of some of the great Free Churches overseas to accept the three historic orders as the basis of union. It must not be forgotten that this involves for them a real and costly sacrifice of principle, as well as of custom and opinion. If real union is to be achieved there

must be sacrifice by all the uniting Churches of things belonging to ecclesiastical tradition which they value. But the governing motive is contribution and mutual enrichment for the edification of the true Body. In the case of the South India proposals, no sacrifice is asked of Anglicans which we cannot and ought not to make. No vital principle is being jeopardised. Naturally, certain "irregularities" of secondary importance will mark interim periods of adjustment, as was realised at the Lambeth Conference in 1920: "When men set their faces steadily towards the ideal of our Appeal, and especially when negotiations for organic reunion are in progress, or, again, when a scheme of union has in any place been adopted, situations will arise in which we should all agree that new lines of action may be followed." [1]

The Church of England therefore is called to be in fact a bridge Church, and can fill a place at this time which neither the Eastern Church nor the Roman Church is prepared to occupy. But the situation cannot wait. Nothing can arrest the unity movement in the mission field. It is vitally necessary for the furtherance of the Gospel; the desire for unity is there; and that desire is of God. That the Church of England can do a unique service in the upbuilding of the Catholic Church of the future is its privilege; it is not a matter of right. Because it has been our privilege to share in taking the knowledge of Christ to other lands, we are not therefore given the right to decide as to the form of Church which shall arise there. That is a matter for the Christians of the country themselves to decide; and many of them are already quite com-

[1] *Report of Lambeth Conference*, 1920, p. 141.

petent to decide it, as they are guided so to do by the Holy Spirit.

If, through blindness or fear, the Church of England refuses officially to take its place in these schemes of union, it will show itself to be untrue to its trust as an inheritor of the Church order which has come down the centuries; and, on the other hand, it will forfeit its true place within the newer Churches of Africa and the East. For union between the Free Churches, which together have the greater share of the work, will inevitably come, and the Church of England will be in danger of becoming a sect out of touch with all other Christian bodies. Our Church, in such an emergency, would also certainly lose the allegiance of some of its greatest missionary sons and daughters, who, with unity being achieved in the young Church they serve, would throw in their lot with that Church, gladly prepared to suffer any disadvantages or penalties (if there be such) which the home Church might decide to inflict upon them.

There is another factor which must be taken into account: the surging tide of nationalism in Eastern countries which is fully shared by Christian nationals. The Jerusalem Meeting disclosed how deep and compelling is the nationalist spirit among the Christians of Africa, India, China and Japan. There is nothing wrong with Christian nationalism, and it adds keenness to the desire for Church unity and fellowship. The desire for a national or racial Church is as legitimate as it is real. Many Englishmen still feel a pride in their national Church, and should be prepared to sympathise with the desire of others for a national Church. National and racial Churches are essential to the

building up of the Body of Christ, for how otherwise can racial gifts be fully expressed and perfected, untainted by foreign influences, except through truly national Churches? But there is a danger. If members of the older Churches refuse to take their place within the national Churches now growing up, the latter will be formed, and will tend, perforce, to be self-centred and self-contained, thus impairing the universal character of Christianity. That is not the wish of the most ardent Christian nationalists in India and China to-day. They are determined to have their national Church, but they are anxious to maintain their relationships with the older branches of the one Church of God. Are we prepared to do our part in maintaining and extending the essentially international nature of the Church?

IV

There are certain features in our world to-day, in addition to those which have been noticed, which render the unification of Christian Churches more urgent, and which show present disunion to be more anomalous than ever before.

There is the menace of secularism. Much, perhaps too much, has been written and spoken on this subject since it gained prominence in the report of the Jerusalem Meeting.[1] The realisation of the almost universal prevalence of the materialistic spirit in the world was one of the surprises of Jerusalem. Secularism was declared to be " the outstanding enemy of Christianity." In the sense in which we were thinking of

[1] *The Christian Life and Message in relation to Non-Christian Systems*, Vol. i, pp. 284–338, 373–75, 402–14.

secularism at Jerusalem that is true and more. Naked secularism is not only an enemy of Christianity: it is the enemy of all religion whatever. But it must be understood in saying this that no thorough-going condemnation of "secularism" is implied. There is much in modern secularism which in purity and disinterestedness of motive, as well as in beneficent results, puts to shame the feeble programmes of the Churches. Moreover, it does not appear to be realised by many speakers who have lately added the subject of secularism to their speeches, that the thing which they condemn is in some of its aspects the by-product of Christian divisions, divisions within the Church itself, and the utterly un-Christian division and classification of life into "secular" and "spiritual" compartments, which has resulted in the alienation from Christianity of much of the best thought and noblest service of the past century.

But admitting the world-wide menace to religion of secularism on its lowest levels, is not this itself a sufficient reason why, at all costs, the Churches should close their ranks and unitedly attack the foe where attack is the only possible course? What are the Churches going to do in the face of this strongly entrenched rival which succeeds, in proportion as they fail, to win to its aims and ideals the youth of the world?

It is the failure of the Churches anywhere to win youth which provides another ominous warning and also a further reason for seizing any satisfactory plan which will give to the Church a united voice and programme. Many parts of the Church's task are sadly in arrears. They are such that they cannot be

tackled by the middle-aged. They require for their fulfilment the enthusiastic and reckless service of youth. But the small programmes of sectional Churches, their mutual jealousies and rivalries, their obsession with trivialities, repel much of the best young life which is finding in "secular" pursuits aims more worthy of adventurous living and an atmosphere in which the whole personality can breathe deeply and freely.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in a recent call for truce from controversy and for concentration on the main tasks, deals with this question. He says: "We have somehow to win the legions of the young to the Church and to the Kingdom of God." [1] They are not yet won. Moreover, it is not only in European countries that many of those who have received their education under Christian influences fail actively to maintain any connection with institutional Christianity. It has been remarked that in the agitations in China during the last few years a marked proportion of the disaffected students had been in Christian schools and colleges, and now were hostile to religion. The reason for this is surely not so much the apparent connection between Christianity and foreign cultures, as the failure of the Churches unitedly to put before the youth of China an ideal clear and compelling enough to win their allegiance.

The youth movement throughout the world to-day is the determining factor for the future. In some instances Christian youth movements are encouraging signs against a background that is dark indeed. But the largest and most highly organised youth movement

[1] *Canterbury Diocesan Gazette*, Sept. 1929. Quoted in *The Times*, Sept. 4, 1929.

at the present time, and one that is united in a clearly defined crusade, is the youth organisation of Soviet Russia. A glance at a map showing the frontiers of Russia will indicate the potential influence of a youth movement numbering millions, which, making use of modern facilities for propagating its aims and ideals, seeks to banish God from human life. That this influence is already making itself strongly felt in China, Persia and elsewhere is certain. A movement among the Churches towards unity for united action, which should be truly spectacular in that it would involve the abandonment of petty and unworthy causes, might provide the one demonstration of faith capable of convincing youth and of winning it for the Church.

Christian disunion stands out in sharp contrast to a general tendency to unite, or to federate, in different spheres of activity. Science is helping us to get beyond the infinite departments and classifications of knowledge. The present age of specialisation gives promise of leading on to a larger synthesis. Professor J. Arthur Thomson has referred to the results of Einstein's research along this line, namely, " that the energies familiar in gravitation and in the motion of familiar objects can be brought into line with the radiant energies of electricity, magnetism, light. If we admit Einstein's reasoning, the physical energies of the world are one. Instead of the old multiverse of forces there is a universe of power. . . . We live in a world of power, more unified than it seemed half a century ago, of pervasive orderliness, a persistent world in which nothing real is known to be lost, a world that becomes progressively more intelligible." In such a world how much longer will the Church perpetuate a disintegra-

tion of power, out of harmony with the cosmic order, as also with the prayer and will of its Founder?

The supreme incentive to Christian unity has already been mentioned. It is the very existence of Christianity. There is little hope of Christianity becoming the religion of the world apart from the reception, in penitence, of new life by the Churches; a life which shall fuse them into a single instrument worthy of God's purposes. It is the Churches that are on trial, not the movements towards unity. No captious criticism of these efforts is justified when they are inspired by the desire to recapture the primitive fellowship of the Church for the purpose of united action. The unity of the future must be the unity of the Church in the first hundred years of its existence. That unity consisted objectively in the proclamation of the one Gospel, and subjectively in the possession of the fellowship of the Spirit.

When unity comes it will not be as the result of an œcumenical council, through balanced reasonings, through agreed ambiguities of formula. It will not come by the retention of a claim here, the granting of a concession there. The rank and file of Church members must be helped to realise that Christian unity is ultimately a question of freedom, not of law. It belongs to spiritual comradeship, not to ecclesiastical casuistry. Christian unity is not the preserve of hierarchies and conferences: it is the common ground of Christian men and women the world over who share the responsibility for the present condition of things. It must be unceasingly reiterated that unity is necessary solely in order that a world-wide Church may come into being and effectively do God's work upon earth.

Nothing but a frank confession of this necessity and of the sin of prolonging division can make unity the true desire of Churches which have been separated so fundamentally, and for so long a time, that they have, by a desperate process of accommodation, become organisms capable of maintaining some form of function in isolation. Unity will be received when in penitence the Churches seek afresh the power of the Spirit for the unfinished task before them.

Bishop Phillips Brooks used an illustration which bears closely on hopes of achieving unity through the laborious process of discussion and diplomacy, as compared with the only real hope of attaining to unity at all. The problem is suggested by the pools of water on the beach at low tide. You can unite some of them by digging channels between them, but they will only be really united when the flood-tide comes in.

The tide of life is low in the many divided Churches. The attempt to unite them by spade-work cannot achieve much success. But if they are willing to let the flood-tide of spiritual life and evangelistic impulse come rushing in, it will overflow all the barriers of ecclesiastical forms and traditions. The Churches will then be united because it will not be possible to keep them apart.

II

REUNION AND THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

By The Rev. G. F. Saywell, M.A., Rector of Holy Trinity, St. Marylebone.

THE problem of reunion is inextricably bound up with the Church's conception of its own nature. Unless we can find common ground there, all our efforts and schemes must prove abortive, or at least they can have little more than temporary success. It is of vital importance, therefore, that we should endeavour to see clearly what is the true nature of the Church as it is pictured for us in the teaching of Christ and in the writings of the New Testament as a whole. There are to-day two outstanding theories of the Church, and even though they both claim a place in the Church of England, at first sight they seem to be irreconcilable—perhaps ultimately they are. I can give only a brief, though I hope not thereby an unfair, summary of these two views.

(1) There is the view called "Catholic," which argues back from that which now is to what it is assumed must have been at the beginning. It is based, and I think admittedly, not so much on historical evidence drawn from the New Testament, as on later and less well-authenticated documents.[1] According to this view, Christ gave full instructions to the Apostles

[1] Cf. Headlam, *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion*, p. 133 f., and Streeter, *The Primitive Church*.

as to the particular form which the organisation of the Church should take, and the methods which it must follow. Its limits were clearly defined. The Apostles laid down the regulations by which the Church was to be governed, and established the ministry through which it was to be maintained; they consecrated their successors, who in turn consecrated theirs; and so on, in an unbroken line of tactual succession down to the present day. This view could not be better nor more lucidly expressed than in the words of Bishop Gore (quoted in Essay III, p. 71), or, less succinctly and somewhat more dogmatically, in the following statement: "No human consent can confer ordination. The Divine power was given by Christ to the Apostles and transmitted by Apostolical Succession."[1] Each local Church was an extension of the mother Church in Jerusalem, and the Apostolic ministry presided over and directed all important decisions. "The Bishop has inherited the authority of the Apostles, and, like them, he speaks for Christ in Ordination."[1]

It need only be said at this point that such a view reads back into the mind of Christ what is clearly a later development. And if it be said that this later development was Spirit-guided, we need not deny it; but it could justly be asserted that the Spirit might under new conditions guide differently; and that the Church might be led in the process of history to adapt its organisation to such changing conditions. And this, in the opinion of many, is what is happening in our own time. If the "Catholic" view is true, then it follows of necessity that no Christian body which lacks epis-

[1] Quoted from *The Church Times* by J. S. Bezzant in *The Modern Churchman*, August 1929, p. 244.

copacy—and the episcopacy which is acknowledged to be in the legitimate "succession"—can be admitted as part of the universal Church.

(2) Those who hold the other theory go back to the records of the Church's origin in the New Testament. And their study of the New Testament leads them to believe that what Christ inaugurated was something much less clearly defined than the Church as it came to be organised at a later date. To the question "Did Jesus found a Church?" they would answer both "Yes" and "No." If by "the Church" is meant a fully thought-out organisation, something comparable to the Catholic order which obtains in so large a part of Christendom to-day—the answer emphatically is "No." But if by "the Church" is meant something more fluid, less organised, a body of disciples to whom *as a community* Christ gave spiritual authority, then the answer is "Yes." Strictly speaking, it was the Apostles who founded the Church; it was the aim of our Lord to prepare them for that great and responsible task by calling them to a particularly intimate relationship with Himself.

When it is said, however, that it was the Apostles who founded the Church, it must be borne in mind that this does not necessarily mean that they personally founded the great primitive Churches, such as those of Antioch, Alexandria and Rome. There are clear indications that the Twelve conceived of their mission as limited to their own people. The sayings in Matt. x. 5 ff. [1] would hardly have been included in that Gospel

[1] "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Nothing could be more specific than these words.

unless the Apostles had based their procedure upon the definite instructions there set forth. If this be so, it follows that the later tradition that, after preaching to the Jews at Jerusalem for twelve years, the Twelve separated in order to found the Gentile Churches, is without any adequate foundation.[1] The Gentile Churches were almost certainly "founded by pilgrims to Jerusalem, who, like those at Pentecost, heard that the hope of Israel had been fulfilled, and returned home with the 'good news.' Churches so founded *must* have differed from one another indefinitely."[2] When we speak, then, of the Apostles founding the Church, such a statement can be understood only in the sense of the original foundation of the Church at Jerusalem.

It is frequently affirmed that the origin of the Church must ultimately be sought for in the Jewish Church of the Old Testament. It may at once be admitted that the Churches, at least among the Jews, were fashioned somewhat on the principle of the synagogue, with its ruler and college of elders. But however much justification there may be for this reading back of the Church's origin to the Old Testament, it may be said without hesitation that the transformation wrought by Christ in the existing conception of the Church—by the abolition, that is, of priesthood and sacrifice, and by the universalising of a national religion—did, in fact, amount to a new

[1] Cf. J. S. Bezzant, *The Modern Churchman*, August 1929, p. 236, who cites in support of this view Matt. xix. 28, and Acts i. 15 ff., and also quotes Streeter's comment on Gal. ii. 1 ff. "Here it is emphatically stated that, at a date at least sixteen, possibly as much as twenty, years after the Crucifixion, even Peter still regarded his mission as limited to 'the circumcision.'"

[2] Bezzant, *ibid.*, p. 237.

beginning. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove from the sayings of Christ that He looked upon the Church which was to be founded upon the twelve Apostles as in essence a continuance of the old Jewish Ecclesia. Similarity of organisation does not involve identity of nature. The British Empire has little or nothing in common with the Roman Empire, apart from the concept of the union of different nations under one sovereign.

What, then, did Jesus inaugurate? He inaugurated a *fellowship ;* and out of this fellowship the Church was born. There can be little doubt that it was His will that external unity should be preserved; we need only remind ourselves of His prayer that His disciples might be one, and of His deep desire that they should love one another: "By this shall men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." The very proof of their discipleship was to be their mutual love. The unity was not to be an end in itself, but a means to an end which should be without limit. "Their unity failed unless it was a demonstration both of Christ and Christianity."[1] And while this unity need not have involved any dead level of uniformity, it did involve charity, understanding and tolerance.

What was the basis of this fellowship? What conditions of discipleship did Jesus lay down? The essential condition was loyalty to Himself: "Follow Me." There was no other condition. What He demanded was a personal relationship to Himself. He laid down no rules for the organisation of the

[1] Oman, *Vision and Authority*, p. 161. "The demonstration (the world) could not reject would be a Church altogether united in her testimony."

fellowship; it was first and foremost a fellowship of the Spirit. It would appear as though He did foresee some kind of organisation, and took it for granted, though He spoke of a Church only twice. To quote Dr. Headlam, " He looked forward to and prepared for the founding of the Church." [1] But the point is that this fellowship which He called into being " was prior to the organised Ecclesia; it was related to it as the life is to the organisation."

The thing that mattered most at the beginning was not the Church's order, but the Church's spirit; not the machine, but the driving force. In that first period of the Church's history a fixed order would have been cramping, artificial, stifling; it would inevitably have set limits to the freedom of the Spirit, as, indeed, too rigid an order is bound always to do. Life presupposes variety, it demands it; and if men try to shut it in too straitly, or even to safeguard it, it will break forth and shatter the protecting barriers.[2] And above all things the Apostolic Church was alive—deeply, amazingly, creatively alive—with a vitality which nothing could prevent from over-flowing and pouring itself out upon the arid desert of the world's

[1] Headlam, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[2] If we may use the analogy with which biology and paleontology provide us, we may also say that in the history of living creatures *progressive development* presupposes variability. In living creatures, apparently, though high specialisation rigidly standardised to adapt itself to environment has survival value, it has very little value for progressive development towards the higher levels of life. This development seems to depend upon the capacity for variation; though of course there must also be the capacity for consolidating and transmitting the gains. The evolution of the higher animals seems to show this clearly; they sometimes varied right away from their previous line, adding to or discarding their new acquisitions according to the necessities of changing environment.

need. "The New Testament is only a fragment of an age written by a 'new race' as they loved to call themselves, spiritually more alive than ours. The trumpets of the spring are sounding through all its pages. The narrative tells the story of the way in which the new life flamed over sea and land, kindling sad and weary men and women to joy and hope, abolishing enmities with love, lifting them out of sin into purity and peace, taking obscure lives and making them great." [1] In this abundance of overflowing vitality, it was inevitable that order should be made to subserve spirit, and not spirit order.

It may be added here, that whatever Christ did or did not instruct His disciples to do in the matter of the Church's order, it is an acknowledged fact that, at all events for some years after the Resurrection, it was generally believed that He would soon—indeed during the life of that generation—return to bring about the consummation of His Kingdom. Is it likely that this expectation would have been so deeply embedded in the minds of the Apostles, if they had been instructed by Christ to establish a fixed order for the transmission of Apostolic authority down the ages?

"The Unity of the Spirit." What does such a phrase imply? How far is the freedom of a Spirit-led community compatible with unity? A merely external unity, no matter how jealously guarded, is no guarantee of spiritual vitality. Unity is a spiritual thing only when it is the expression of an inward urge—an urge to fellowship. The unity of the Spirit is not compatible with any kind of rigid order; it is the very antithesis of uniformity. And, as a matter of fact,

[1] Cairns, *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*, p. 133.

there was no uniform system of Church order in the primitive Church. Uniformity came later, and, as Canon Streeter remarks, it was, for those times, perhaps a necessary development.[1] Note again St. Paul's words, "giving diligence to keep (τηρεῖν) the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 3). But τηρεῖν means, strictly, "to watch over," "to take care of," rather than to "keep"; so that he is exhorting us, not to keep a thing that cannot be lost—for the unity of the Spirit is an inviolable unity—but to keep carefully in mind the fact that, no matter how varied may be its manifestation and its operations, the Spirit is one and cannot be divided.[2] How different would have been the history of the Church if this injunction had been remembered! If the Church had concentrated its attention on the unity of the Spirit instead of endeavouring to control the diversity of its operations, the attempts which have been made to create and preserve a rigid external unity would have been seen to be unnecessary and even harmful.

If we are to see this matter of unity aright, we must try to rid our minds of any mechanical conception of it. "The unity of the Spirit" suggests a common aim, a common loyalty, the sharing of a common life. We may illustrate its meaning from the life of a family. In the ideal family there is every opportunity for individual development; the different characteristics of each member are allowed freely to express themselves. Of course, if unity is to be preserved there will be some necessary limitation of the lengths to which self-expression can go—at least self-expression must not

[1] Streeter, *The Primitive Church*, p. 261.
[2] Cf. *Foundations*, p. 350, note.

be only another name for self-assertion; but the limitations of the individual member will be such as are dictated by understanding, sympathy, and the recognition of the freedom of the other members of the family. So it was with the Church in the beginning. "Everywhere there was readiness to experiment, and, where circumstances seemed to demand it, to change." [1]

This must have meant a large freedom for individuals, or at least for local Churches. The essential unity of the Church was so profound, and so clearly recognised, that nothing could endanger it but the lack of tolerance, or unthinking self-assertion. The words of Dr. Headlam are very much to the point here: "The Church of England has failed to be a complete national Church because it has been too anxious to mould all piety on one model. With more breadth of sympathy it might have absorbed the Presbyterians at the Restoration. If it had had rather more spiritual life it might have retained the Wesleyans. It has only succeeded in harmonising the vigorous life of Evangelicals and Tractarians by looking on a great deal of ecclesiastical law as obsolete. There are at the present time many various forms of worship and different types of piety within the Church of England." [2]

Let us look again at St. Paul's view of unity as set forth in his Epistle to the Ephesians. The theme of the Epistle has been described as "the Unity of the Church," but, as Professor Anderson Scott points out, such a description is not really adequate. Its theme is rather the bringing together into one Body of Jews and Gentiles, between whom, before the advent of Christianity, a great gulf had been fixed—a gulf made seem-

[1] Streeter, *op. cit.*, p. 262. [2] Headlam, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

ingly impassable by a narrow, mechanical and exclusive Judaism on the one hand, and by prejudice and a supercilious attitude of superiority on the other "This removal of the 'middle wall of partition,' the cancelling of 'the feud of the law' (Eph. ii. 15), the unification into 'one new man' of these hitherto antagonistic elements, was what filled the Apostle's mind with wondering and adoring praise." [1] And yet, indirectly, this Epistle has a real bearing on the subject of unity, for the Gentiles and the Jews, by entering the Koinonia, became *σύσσωμα*—that is, fellow-members of the one Body, sharers of the same common life. The Epistle describes the character of the truly Catholic Church. Christ had made peace between two diverse and sometimes hostile sections of humanity. The barrier was broken down. The differing racial characteristics were not obliterated, they were brought into the common stock to be consecrated to the service of the Church's Lord, enriching the fellowship and enlarging the potentialities of its witness. Thus was symbolised and foreshadowed the Universal Church in which all nations and tongues should become citizens of the one city of God.

That this bringing together into one fellowship of Jew and Gentile should raise important problems is only what we should expect. We have the difficulty expressed in its acutest form in Acts xv. In this chapter we are given a significant illustration of the readiness of the primitive Church to sacrifice traditions and long-cherished beliefs for the sake of a wider evangelism. No doubt much seemed to be at stake; no doubt there were those who feared that the purity

[1] *The Spirit*, p. 140.

and integrity of the Church were being jeopardised. We gather from verse 5 that these were mostly men who, previously to their accepting Jesus as the Messiah, had belonged to the Pharisees, though there would appear to be no very clear and direct evidence that there was any difference of opinion between the Pharisees and the majority of the other Jews. Such a difference, however, is perhaps implied. The chief, though not the only question at issue was: Were the Gentile converts to the Christian faith to be admitted to the Christian Church only through the gate of the Jewish Church? Must they first become Jews? Must they be circumcised and undertake to keep the Law? Obviously the party which most strongly insisted on answering these questions in the affirmative had not gained a very deep understanding of the spirit and genius of the Gospel, nor of the earliest disciples, "who were mostly of the simpler, non-pharisaic type of piety, as we see from the Pharisees' criticisms in the Gospels." [1] But under the wise guidance of Peter and James the general good sense of the majority prevailed; and in verse 22 the decision is clearly looked upon as representing, not merely the opinion of its leaders, but of the whole mother Church. "On any interpretation, the decree represents a great victory of the liberal party." [2]

There can be little doubt that this incident was of a crucial nature. Was the Church to be a mere extension of Judaism, a new Jewish sect, or was it to break through the bonds of Judaism and begin to lose its distinctive Jewish colouring? If the decision of the

[1] *Century Bible*, Acts, p. 274.
[2] *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, S.P.C.K., p. 359.

Conference had been in accordance with the wishes of the " men who came down from Judea " and " certain of the sect of the Pharisees," a rupture would have been created which at that early stage of the Church's history would have been fatal. Indeed, Christianity might never have spread beyond the bounds of Judaism, or at least its success among Gentiles would have been limited to a comparatively small number of proselytes. It might even, as Canon Streeter suggests, have developed a Caliphate hereditary in the family of James.[1] But once the principle of freedom, or rather of diversity in unity, was asserted, the Church was able to set out on its great mission as the herald and guardian of the truly universal religion. Instead of hardening into a Jewish sect, it became, at least in embryo, the Catholic Church.

Is there not a valuable lesson for us to-day in this story? It cannot have been an altogether easy thing for the Jewish leaders of the Church to sacrifice, as they did, their own traditional practices—which they had been taught from their earliest days to look upon as necessary to salvation—for the larger unity. The ideal of comprehensiveness, natural as it may seem to most of us in the Church of England, would no doubt appear to them to be full of danger, and perhaps impossible to attain without the sacrifice of important principles. Yet they did take the step; they did show a readiness to experiment; and the results of their decision abundantly vindicated the wisdom of their action. Unity, real unity, will not come unless, and until, we can show the same spirit of large-minded toleration. The price must be paid. We cannot expect all those

[1] Streeter, *op. cit.* p. 40.

who do not share our views as to what is essential to a truly Catholic Church to do all the giving, nor would it be right or Christian to make such a demand. Neither, on the other hand, shall we ourselves be expected to do all the giving—as some members of our Church seem to imagine. The Jews did not make all the concessions; the Gentiles too were asked to pay a certain price for unity; they too were expected to sacrifice some of their freedom. But for the leaders of the Church the preservation of the unity of the Spirit was of such paramount importance, their dread of schism (one of the cardinal sins of the Church) was so profound, that every possible concession, short of the betrayal of fundamental principles, must be made to the consciences and convictions of their fellow-Christians who had been nurtured in a tradition different from that of the great majority of the early believers.

The Church overseas is faced with a somewhat similar set of problems in our own time. Everywhere, as the Jerusalem Meeting of 1928 abundantly proved, the Church is finding it necessary to decide what are the minimum demands it must make upon the new converts. And these converts, and also would-be converts, are sorely perplexed by the differing and often contradictory voices with which the Church speaks. Hence the imperative need of a concerted policy and a united front. The Jerusalem Meeting issued a clear call to a new venture of faith. But this call was issued, could only be issued, as a result of heavy sacrifices of cherished traditions for the sake of the wider appeal of a truly Catholic Church. The proposals from South India now under consideration bring before us the same kind of challenge, and the acceptance or

rejection of these proposals is fraught with immense possibilities.

We have already seen that the Church in New Testament times was essentially a fellowship, whose mission was not so much to propagate a particular institution as to widen and adapt itself until it became truly Catholic in spirit; learning gradually by experience how to combine freedom with order and unity, demanding, as fundamental, loyalty to Christ and the observance of the two "Sacraments of the Gospel"—Baptism and the Holy Communion. Let us now endeavour to sum up briefly the marks of this Church.

(1) *The Unity of the Spirit.* This we have already discussed. Suffice it now to emphasise once more that it was unity in diversity. One Spirit, but many manifestations. The Church, at least in these modern days, accepts this in theory, but it must be admitted that it is all too slow in carrying out its implications. No one would dream of insisting on the standardising of religious experience; the sheer impossibility of doing so is so entirely obvious. It takes all sorts of people to make a world, and it takes all sorts of religious experience to make a truly Catholic Church. Why then should we insist upon the standardising of the Church's order, unless indeed it were as a means of concentrating, and so of strengthening, the Church's impact upon the world—that is, unless we saw it not as a matter of spiritual necessity, but of wisdom? Such a motive would at least be justifiable, and even laudable, though whether it would accomplish the end in view is more than doubtful. Standardisation would almost certainly lead to a static condition, which again would sooner or later be broken through by the creative life

of the Spirit. So the story of schism would repeat itself.

If in the primitive Church the unity of the Spirit was not violated by different types of organisation, why should not we to-day, gladly and without reservation, recognise the marks of the Spirit in those Churches whose order differs from our own, and yet which claim —basing their claim upon arguments which an unprejudiced reading of the New Testament and of the Apostolic Fathers cannot but recognise as valid—to justify themselves by reference to the practice of the Church in the first century? If we could begin anew to concentrate our thought on the spiritual unity which actually does exist, and forget for a moment the external things that divide, a great step would have been taken towards that external expression of unity which would do so much to convince the world of the reality of our belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Once we can enter into the full unity of the Spirit, the outward expression of our unity can quite well take care of itself; that is perhaps of secondary importance.

In the "Catholic" conception of the Church, schism is a heinous sin. Such sin, it is sometimes asserted, was committed at the Reformation by the non-episcopal Churches. Yet it is admitted that God has blessed their ministry. Could they at once be guilty of heinous sin and also recipients of the Divine approval and blessing? It is the *spirit* of schism that is sinful—the spirit that prompts men deliberately to violate the fellowship. The divisions of Christendom are not all due to the schismatic spirit; indeed, one might go so far as to say that sometimes it may have been God's

will that men should assert some forgotten truth, or some new aspect of truth, even though their assertion inevitably involved separation from the main body of the Church.[1]

Another outstanding feature of the Primitive Church was its

(2) *Freedom.* "The Unity of the Spirit" did not mean that no development of the Church's order was possible—that is to say, it did not imply a permanent state of disorder—but it did set a limit to the character of what was possible, and it did mean that any development must be tested and checked by the character of the original fellowship. Just as for our true interpretation and standard of the Holy Communion—the supreme expression of the *koinōnia*—we must go back to its institution, so with regard to the Church's order, no matter how far the exercise of our freedom may carry us, we may not insist on any one system as essential to the Church's existence, but must ever ask of this or that development the question: Is it in harmony with the spirit of the original fellowship, at least so far as that spirit seems to us to reflect the mind of Christ? At all events, the conceding of freedom to those who do not agree with us, as well as the insistence on freedom for ourselves, will mean that the belief that we ourselves are right will not *ipso facto* mean the conviction that others are wrong. If Canon Streeter is right when he affirms that "at the end of the first century A.D. there existed, in different provinces of the Roman Empire, different systems of Church government," and that "among these the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Independent, can each discover

[1] See Essay IV.

the prototype of the system to which he himself adheres," [1] then there can be no doubt that a very large measure of freedom was one of the distinguishing marks of the primitive Church. Again, to quote the words of Dr. Temple, " Those who have insisted on a ministry of order are right, and so are those who have insisted that the wind bloweth where it listeth, and the spirit of prophecy may light on any man." [2] The ideal is freedom and harmony, and there is no necessary antagonism between the two conceptions. The widest freedom may be combined with the fullest harmony; indeed, it may be said that the wider the variety of individual and corporate experiment—so long as the endeavour springs from, and is ever harnessed to the ideal of loyalty to the fellowship—the fuller and richer will be the resultant harmony.

A third mark of the primitive Church was:

(3) *Loyalty to Christ.* This was the great unifying principle. " All one in Christ Jesus " was more than a mere mystical conception of unity. It was that, but it was much more. Again and again St. Paul stresses the unity of all believers in Christ. " There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." [3] He even goes so far as to say, " Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of goodwill; the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the

[1] Streeter, *The Primitive Church*, p. 9.
[2] *Foundations*, p. 355. Cf. also Oman, *Vision and Authority*, Chapter XI.
[3] Gal. iii. 28.

defence of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice; yea, and will rejoice." [1] And even Ignatius, insistent as he was upon episcopal authority, said more than perhaps he realised in his oft-quoted words, "Wherever Jesus may be, there is the Catholic Church." [2] There is no evidence that Jesus laid down any other essential condition of discipleship than that of loyalty to Himself. Had there been other essential conditions, He would surely have left us in no uncertainty as to what they were. He lays down no rules and regulations. "Follow Me" is the constant and clear and unqualified challenge. "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." [3] "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven." [4] It is a matter of personal attachment to Himself. No other mediator between man and God is needed; indeed, loyalty to Him is loyalty to God, fellowship with Him is fellowship with God. The idea of either Church or priest coming in a mediatorial capacity between Him and the human soul is utterly foreign to the spirit of His teaching.

Shall we, then, lay down conditions of discipleship other than those which He laid down? Shall we

[1] Phil. i. 15–18.

[2] It might be mentioned here that the very insistence of Ignatius upon episcopacy suggests that it was not by any means as yet firmly established. "What nobody questions, nobody passionately defends." It is rather curious, too, in view of the modern insistence upon the *Succession* that Ignatius says nothing about it.

[3] St. Mark ix. 34; St. Luke ix. 23; St. Matt. xvi. 24.

[4] St. Matt. x. 32.

insist upon adherence to a particular form of Church order as being essential to discipleship? Would not a frank and courageous recognition of the supreme simplicity of our Lord's demand open the door to a new possibility of unity, particularly in the mission field? To say that it is simple is not tantamount to saying that it is a challenge to which men can easily respond. It is easier, far easier, for a man to join a particular religious organisation and to submit to its regulations than to enter into a personal relationship with One who demands to the full his love, his loyalty and his self-sacrificing service. The Beatitudes are more difficult to accept than the Creeds. To recognise this fact would not for a moment endanger the integrity of organised Christianity, nor would it involve the risk of a gradual weakening of the bond which unites those who are bound by a common loyalty and love. It would strengthen that bond, and would almost inevitably tend to make more certain the ultimate outward expression of the "Unity of the Spirit."

(4) A fourth mark of the primitive Church was a *powerful evangelistic spirit.* This it had caught from Jesus. During His ministry among them His disciples had become accustomed to the idea of going forth to proclaim the "good news." And His last recorded words to them were the command that they should "go forth and teach all nations." He clearly visualised a Church which should include Gentiles as well as Jews; "they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God." [1] He expects His disciples to pass on His challenge and His invitation, and con-

[1] St. Luke xiii. 29.

tinually to add to their numbers. But this very task of widespread evangelism presupposes elasticity and the bringing into the fellowship of a very wide diversity of experience and tradition. We have already referred to the vexed question of Jew *versus* Gentile as it is illustrated in Acts xv. This kind of problem must have arisen frequently, and especially over the matter of Church order, for the Gentiles were without the background of the Jewish hierarchy and the organisation of the synagogue. The attempt in those early days to impose a rigid order upon non-Jewish converts would have been disastrous, and, speaking generally, the attempt was not made. The organisation arose gradually out of the growing need for the centralisation of authority, partly owing to the necessities of discipline, and partly owing to the fight with heresy. The Church created episcopacy and gave it its authority, it was not episcopacy that created the Church.[1]

To what, then, does all this point? If the monarchical episcopate was a development to meet the growing needs of the Churches, both as a unifying principle and a guarantee of orderly progress, then it follows that the episcopate is of the *bene esse* and not of the *esse* of the Church. And if this be so, profoundly as we may believe in the episcopal form of government as being in harmony with the general practice of the early Church, eagerly as we may look forward to a reunited Church which shall be episcopal in character, we shall not dare to affirm that the non-episcopal Churches possess orders which are not valid—inasmuch as they are conferred by the laying-on of hands and by the prayers of the people—nor that the Sacraments

[1] Cf. Streeter, *The Primitive Church*, p. 72 et passim.

administered in such Churches have not the true essentials of the Sacraments. Order must once more learn to subserve spirit; fellowship must once again become the distinguishing characteristic of the Church; life, the life abundant which Christ came to bestow, must ever be allowed to find new channels through which it can flow without let or hindrance for the revivifying, not only of the Church itself, but of the common life of men.

"True union," it has been well said, "lies ever before and never behind." "Unity, when it comes," said Canon Gairdner, quoting from one of the commissions of the Edinburgh 1910 Conference, "must be something richer, grander, more comprehensive than anything which we can see at present. It is something into which, and up to which, we must grow, something of which and for which we must become worthy." [1] We cannot retrace our steps. We cannot reproduce the conditions in which the Church took its rise. We shall never heal our divisions by endeavouring to go back to the place from which we started. There is one way, and one way only, of attaining unity, "which is to set the face forward, assured of meeting again nearer the final goal"; and even though, after the converging roads have met, division should still arise, "the deeper bond beneath all division would not be forgotten, and the great truth, that amid all the Churches the one true Church is the Church of all the saints, would not be obscured. Then we should see that the true unity and the glorious liberty of the children of God are not in antagonism, but in absolute agreement; and that, according as we approach that

[1] Padwick, *Temple Gairdner of Cairo*, p. 269.

Divine goal, we shall leave behind us the forces that divide." [1] We cannot retrace our steps, but we shall do well to try again to recapture that overcoming spirit of freedom in fellowship which made the primitive Church—few in numbers and not over-rich in the quality of its human material—an irresistible army which went forth conquering and to conquer.

[1] Oman, *Vision and Authority*, p. 152.

III

THE ORIGIN OF ORDERS IN RELATION TO LATER DEVELOPMENTS AND PRESENT DAY CLAIMS

By the Rev. A. J. Tait, D.D., Canon of Peterborough.

The Appeal to the New Testament

THE various forms and organisations of official ministry in Christendom have behind them at least this one common principle, the intention to be true to the purpose of our Lord as it was unfolded in the Apostolic age and recorded in the Apostolic writings. This fact makes the divergencies the more remarkable, for if any permanent organisation had been committed to the Church by the Lord during His earthly ministry, or if the Apostles had provided for the Church any exclusive form of ministry, it would be inconceivable that the appeal to the New Testament should have resulted in such diversities of ministerial organisation as are represented by Episcopacy, Presbyterianism and Congregationalism.

It appears to be impossible to regard even the filling up of the place of the traitor Apostle as having been due to any instruction given by the Lord. When St. Peter led the waiting assembly of Apostles and disciples to take this step, he appealed for his authority to the Old Testament.[1] If the Lord had given an order to this effect, St. Peter's silence about it would be inexplicable, and if St. Peter had appealed to such an order, St.

[1] Acts i. 16, 20.

Luke's omission of reference to the fact in his statement of the authority upon which St. Peter acted would be unaccountable. In this connection, moreover, it is important to note the fact that no other attempt to maintain the succession of the Twelve Apostles is recorded. We find no hint of a successor being elected to fill the place of St. James, who was put to death by Herod. Indeed the qualifications and functions of the Apostles, as stated by St. Peter,[1] admitted of no permanent succession to the Twelve nor continuity of the Apostolate, if it is viewed as an order; for the men who had companied with the Lord Jesus from the baptism of John, and could testify as eye-witnesses to His resurrection, were obviously few in number and limited to one generation.

But to return to the point of the divergencies: if the organisation of official ministry was evolved in response to circumstances and environment, and was not prescribed in advance, we can understand why it is that the appeal to the New Testament is capable of such varied results; for then everything depends on the stage in the evolution to which the appeal is made.[2] Are we to appeal to the leadership of St. Peter, as recorded in Acts i.–v. and, in the light of St. Matthew xvi. 18,[3]

[1] Acts i. 21 ff.

[2] This statement was written before I had had the opportunity of reading Canon Streeter's examination of the life of the primitive Church, with special reference to the origins of the Christian ministry. I seize this opportunity of referring to his book *The Primitive Church* (Macmillan). His unhesitating assertion of "a primitive diversity in Christian institutions," a variety called forth by the differing circumstances of local Churches, illustrates the nature of the problem that is involved in any attempt at reproducing the primitive Church order.

[3] The Vincentian maxim, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, would not permit the use of this passage for establishing

regard him as having been entrusted by the Lord with sovereignty over the Church and the duty of transmitting that sovereignty to a successor for transmission in a permanent Petrine succession? Before doing so, we must pay attention to the following facts. When the sons of Zebedee made request that they might have the highest places in the Kingdom, they evidently entertained no conception, nor did the Lord in His reply give any hint, that the chief place had been already assigned;[1] there was dispute among the Apostles as to which of them should be the greatest, on the night before the Lord's death;[2] St. Peter, with St. John, was sent by the Apostles on a mission to Samaria;[3] at the Council of Jerusalem St. Peter is in the position of a witness, while St. James presides;[4] "James, Cephas, and John" (note the order) recognised that St. Paul had been entrusted by God with a position in the Gentile section of the Church that was equal to that of St. Peter in the Jewish section;[5] at Antioch St. Paul resisted St. Peter to the face, because he "stood condemned" for compromising on the principle of the catholicity of the Church.[6]

We need not enter into the question as to whether St. Peter became the bishop of Rome,[7] nor need we stress Cyprian's successful repudiation of the bishop of Rome's attempt to impose his authority over him in the third

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the doctrine of the Petrine sovereignty. Cf. Salmon *Infallibility of the Church*, p. 329, ed. Murray, 1888: "I suppose there is not a text in the whole New Testament on which the opinion of the Fathers is so divided: and you have to come down late indeed before anyone finds the Bishop of Rome there."

[1] St. Mark x. 35 ff.
[2] St. Luke xxii. 24; cf. ix. 46.
[3] Acts viii. 14.
[4] Acts xv. 7 ff.
[5] Gal. ii. 6–10.
[6] Gal. ii. 11–14.
[7] See Salmon, *op. cit.*, pp. 343 ff.

century.[1] The alleged sovereignty of the Petrine succession fails at its source: there was no such sovereignty to be transmitted.

Shall we then appeal to the government of the Church in Palestine by the Apostles, as represented in the record of Acts vi.–xii., and, bearing in mind the Lord's commission of remitting and retaining sins, believe that valid ministry in the Church has only been perpetuated through an unbroken line of ordination from the Twelve as the source? That there is in Christendom an unbroken line of ministerial succession which started in the days of the Apostles, and that the Anglican Communion claims to participate in it, are positions that are generally accepted; but (1) that the commission of St. John xx. 19 ff. was the appointment of official ministry in the Church is disputed, and (2) that the original Apostles were the exclusive source of the succession is contrary to fact.

It would be exceedingly precarious to base the claim upon the commission recorded in St. John xx. 19 ff.; for the interpretation that it was delivered to an assembly of Apostles and disciples, representing the Church, and that the Lord was commissioning the Church for its work in the world, and not a ministry for its work in the Church—this interpretation is too strong in itself and too widely and substantially maintained [2] to permit an exclusive claim for any theory of ministerial validity, still less for any particular organisation of ministry, to be established on this ground.

[1] See Salmon, *op. cit.*, pp. 399 ff.

[2] Cf. Westcott, *Gospel of St. John*, *in loco*; Fulham Conference Report on *Confession and Absolution* (Longmans, 1902); Drury, *Confession and Absolution* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1903). See also Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 32 ff.

But apart from this, an exclusive line of ministry starting from the original Apostles as the source, and secured by ordination, rules out St. Paul [1] and all the ministry in the Church that has been derived from him and his fellow-workers; and, in view of his extensive missionary activity, we cannot be wrong in regarding the Pauline succession as having contributed a far larger element than that provided through succession from the original Apostles.

Yet again, shall we appeal to Acts xiii.–xxviii. and the Epistles of St. Paul for testimony to ministry as it was exercised in the Churches of his planting? We find evidence of the appointment of "elders" "in every Church," [2] of "bishops and deacons" at Philippi,[3] and of "bishops" (or "presbyters") and "deacons" at Ephesus,[4] and of "bishops" (or "presbyters") in Crete; [5] but it is remarkable that in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians [6] he writes about God's provision of ministry in the Church, and makes no mention of bishops, presbyters and deacons. Similarly, in his letter to the Churches of Asia,[7] he specifies different kinds of ministry as having been given by the ascended Lord for the purpose of "perfecting the saints into their work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ"; but he includes no reference to the three orders. Two explanations of the omissions are well supported, the one stressing the distinction between functions and offices,[8] the other the distinction between higher and temporary offices and those

[1] See Gal. i. 1, 11 ff., ii. 6 ff.
[2] Acts xiv. 23. [3] Phil. i. 1.
[4] Acts xx. 17, 28; cf. 1 Tim. iii. 2, 12; v. 17.
[5] Tit. i. 5 ff. [6] 1 Cor. xii. 28. [7] Eph. iv. 11 ff.
[8] See *e.g.* Hort, *Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 157 ff.; Armitage Robinson, *Ephesians*, p. 97.

which were subordinate and permanent; [1] but whatever explanation is offered, the plain fact is that St. Paul could write about the divine provision of ministry in the Church without including any mention of bishops, presbyters and deacons; and that fact indicates a condition of fluidity and elasticity before the exercise of spiritual gifts for ministry became dependent upon the offices which we now know as Holy Orders. This conception seems to be confirmed by the fact that in the two lists St. Paul places Prophets next to Apostles. In the Epistle to the Ephesians [2] he has previously described the Church as a temple "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone"; and we must either interpret the words as meaning only a succession of truth and life, and refuse to appeal to them in support of belief in an Apostolic succession of ministry, or make room in our thought for a Prophetic ministerial succession as well as for an Apostolic ministerial succession. In the latter alternative we must recognise what is involved; for the essential characteristic of the Prophet was that of a man directly commissioned through the inspiration of God, and not mediately by any kind of ordination.

The Prophetic ministry requires more than this passing reference; but before enlarging upon it I wish to suggest that the evidence before us leads to the conclusion that no exclusive claim to any particular form or organisation of ministry in the Church can be based on the appeal to the New Testament. Dr.

[1] See *e.g.* Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry*, pp. 7 ff.; Headlam, *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion*, pp. 60 ff.; Streeter, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 ff.

[2] Eph. ii. 20 ff.

Headlam's examination of the evidence has led him to write as follows :—

> " The foundation of that Society which we call the Christian Church was a part of the divine plan, and to that end our Lord appointed His Apostles, who became the first ministers of the new Society; but He gave no directions as to the form of organisation of the new community, and the actual organisation which was ultimately developed was different from anything which He personally established. The Apostles, as the first rulers of the Church, gradually built up a ministry adapted to the conditions of the times, but they, too, gave no directions that have been preserved for us in any trustworthy or authoritative manner as to what should be the form of the society, and, as a matter of fact, after they passed away we find the Church ruled over by officers different from those that had existed in the Apostolic Church as it is presented to us, although doubtless linked to it by a close organic connection." [1]

Canon Streeter likewise emphasises the illusive character of the attempt to discover in the New Testament a single and exclusive type of Church order, and regards it as one of the chief obstacles to reunion :—

> " However great " (he writes) " the reverence for scientific truth and historic fact, they " (*i.e.* " the theologians of rival Churches ") " have at least hoped that the result of their investigations would be to vindicate Apostolic authority for the type of Church order to which they were themselves attached. The Episcopalian has sought to find episcopacy, the Presbyterian presbyterianism, and the Independent a system of independency, to be the form of Church government in New Testa-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 242.

ment times. But while each party to the dispute has been able to make out a case for his own view, he has never succeeded in demolishing the case of his opponent. The explanation of this deadlock, I have come to believe, is quite simple. It is the uncriticised assumption, made by all parties to the controversy, that in the first century there existed a single type of Church order." [1]

Mr. F. R. Barry sums up the position thus:—

"The future lines of the Church's development cannot be decided merely by law and history. They depend upon its function in the world, *i.e.*, what it is God's will for the Church to do. This is the point of view of the New Testament. No one who reads the New Testament can suppose that the form of the Church, and the methods of its government, were laid down for it in advance, either by its founder or the Apostles. Like everything else that is alive, it grew, pushing out new organs and organisations, under the guidance of the Spirit, in response to the changing needs of new environment. Thus the appeal to Scripture is useless if it means an attempt to find there the model for the organisation of the modern Church." [2]

This doctrine of development must be distinguished from Newman's development of doctrine. The appeal to the New Testament is essential, if, for example, we are asked to believe that the Christian ministry is a continuance of the Jewish hierarchy under different titles, but with similar functions. Any such Judaistic conception of ministry in the Christian Church involves a direct contradiction of Apostolic principles, and must be rejected as retrogression. The appeal to the New

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. viii, ix.
[2] See *The Guardian*, June 28th, 1929.

Testament holds good to the end for the basic principles of Christianity.

The Prophetic Basis of the Ministry [1]

An inquiry into the basis of the Christian ministry goes below all questions about separate orders: it concerns the foundations on which all orders rest in the last resort. In the life of the primitive Church prophecy played a part too little considered to-day. Of the earlier religion of Israel prophecy was the very soul, and it is to the prophets that we owe the greater part of the Old Testament Scriptures. It was "a prophet indeed" that John the Baptist was accounted by the Jews; and it was in the same character that the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to His contemporaries.[2] Even at the end, when looking back over the days of His sojourn among them, His disciples described Him as "Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people." [3] After the resurrection, in the earliest life of the Church, the prominence of prophecy becomes greater rather than less. The Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, the earliest uncanonical writings teem with allusions to the presence and power of prophecy as an active factor of the first importance. The detailed proof of this would require too much space here, but two passages whose significance is unmistakable must be instanced.

[1] For the substance and the wording, for the most part, of the following statement I am indebted to a manuscript of the Rev. E. P. Boys-Smith, Vicar of Hordle, Hants, who has kindly given permission for the use of it. As I have not transcribed his paper *in extenso*, I accept responsibility for what is written here, while expressing my indebtedness to his manuscript.

[2] St. Mark viii. 28.

[3] St. Luke xxiv. 19.

St. Peter explained the Pentecostal happenings as a manifestation of prophecy.[1] No longer was one called here, and another there, to do the prophet's work in isolation, but there was an uprising of prophecy throughout the whole company of believers. To the Apostle's mind that was the central characteristic of the infant Church.

About a generation later, prophecy ceases to be a universal feature, for the inspiration of the average believer now finds effect rather in holiness of life than in ministry. None the less, prophecy is fundamental in the Church, which rests upon "The Apostles and prophets" and ultimately upon Jesus Christ.[2] This statement of St. Paul indicates the place which prophecy occupied in the structure of the Church, when the first excitement of the new life had passed away and the Church was becoming conscious of its larger destiny. The conjunction of Apostles and prophets as the foundation of the Church results from the fact that they served the same final purpose, but in ways that supplemented each other. Apostles and prophets equally were witnesses directly chosen by the Lord Himself. The Apostles were distinctively witnesses to His Incarnation. The central point in their testimony was the resurrection, but its scope was His earthly life of ministry.[3] We can think of the prophets, on the other hand, as being distinctively witnesses to the continuous and unseen presence of the living Lord. They too were commissioned by the Lord directly, and owed their authority to no one else. It was the duty of all who heard their words to test them, for impostors were not wanting who

[1] Acts ii. 14 ff. [2] Eph. ii. 19.
[3] Acts i. 21; cf. 1 John i. 2.

pretended a commission that they had not received; but the authority of the prophet did not rest upon human recognition. Thus the Church is built upon the double foundation, and that is what the Lord Himself predicted: "When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, He shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." [1]

Originally the Christian ministry rested upon the same double basis on which the Church itself was founded. The Seven were selected as being prophets, recognised by the body of believers as being men whom the Lord Himself commissioned, and as such they were received by the Apostles, who publicly authorised them to act in the Church in an administrative capacity.[2] It is important to observe that no hint is given that any gift of inspiration was bestowed through the laying-on of the Apostles' hands. They possessed the gift before, and for its possession they were chosen. The Apostles' action conferred not power, but status among the brethren.

In the case of Barnabas and Saul,[3] the Holy Spirit spake through the prophets who designated Barnabas and Saul for their mission; but on this occasion no Apostles were present, and the leaders of the Church ("prophets and teachers") did as the Apostles had done in the instance of the Seven.

Timothy's gift was bestowed by prophecy with the laying-on of the hands of the presbyters.[4] In the light of the part which the prophets took in the commissioning of St. Paul, we can interpret this as meaning that

[1] St. John xv. 26. [2] Acts vi. 1–6. [3] Acts xiii. 1 ff.
[4] 1 Tim. iv. 14; cf. i. 18; 2 Tim. i. 6.

Timothy was designated for ministry by the prophets, and was openly authorised to act by St. Paul and the elders of the Church in recognition of the Lord's selection through the prophetic agency.

The common principles that underlie these conspicuous instances of ministerial order in the Apostolic times are:—

(1) The commission was held to be derived from the Lord.

(2) It was indicated through prophecy, the guidance of Spirit-inspired men.

(3) Public recognition and Church ordering were given through the laying-on of hands by the leaders of the Church, whether Apostles or not. When Apostles were present they were the natural leaders, and as such acted for the Church: when they were not present, the local leaders fulfilled the function.

In the course of time, as the administrative organisation of the Church developed, the prophetic function receded into the background, while the ecclesiastical acquired ever-growing prominence and ultimately monopolised attention. The later history is therefore of very subordinate interest for the study of the basis of the Christian ministry. It presents only a one-sided development of the original ideas, which consequently tended to obscure rather than to illustrate the nature of the commission which the Christian minister holds. For the basis of the Christian ministry is not ecclesiastical ordination, but a divine commission made known through inspiration and endorsed by ecclesiastical authority. Apostolical succession represented

by the historic episcopate stands for continuity and for order, and as such is a factor of great value; but it does not constitute a principle which may be used as a criterion for testing and deciding the validity of ministry in the Church, seeing that in Apostolic days Christ's commission could be brought into line with Church order by prophets. The theory of validity of ministry and Sacraments depending upon a hierarchy, or being bound by constitutional law, ignores the fact that the essence of the prophetic order was the direct and immediate commission by inspiration. It was on this account that the danger of false prophets arose; and it is noteworthy that both in the New Testament [1] and in the Didache the criterion was not the holding of office conferred by the official ministry, but the teaching and conduct of the prophet. A principle that underlies official ministry—namely, that personal unworthiness does not affect the validity of such ministry—had no application to the prophets. These were the men who in the primitive Church order of the Didache were treated with the utmost deference and honour, and particularly when presiding at the Eucharist.

Apostolical Succession

Canon Streeter stresses primitive diversity in Christian institutions; he has reached the position that the communities of disciples which sprang up in various ways, various places, various environments, " differed according to the degree of knowledge and insight of the first enthusiast who preached to them, according also to the temper and type of their earliest converts. There was ' one Lord, one faith, one baptism,' but the

[1] See 1 John iv. 1–6.

content of the faith and its outward expression in the life of the local community cannot but have varied enormously from place to place." [1] Moreover, he finds the presumption of such differences confirmed by the early diversities in such matters as the time of keeping Easter, the liturgies, doctrinal emphases, and the content of the Canon of Holy Scripture. "The history of Catholic Christianity during the first five centuries is the history of the progressive standardisation of a diversity which had its origin in the Apostolic age."

But this diversity does not mean that belief in the unity of the Church was a development. On the contrary, "the standardisation would not have been possible but for the fact that in theory the Church was from the beginning and always envisaged as one and indivisible. The first Christians did not regard themselves as a new society, but as the ancient People of God—that is, as that portion of the Church of the Patriarchs and Prophets which had not, by rejecting the Messiah, forfeited its birthright and cut itself off from the promises of Israel." That belief was doubtless assisted by the fact that in their experience the prophetic doctrine of the Remnant and prediction of the inclusion of the Gentiles were being realised.

Whether Canon Streeter's estimate of the original diversity in the local communities is accepted or not, it will hardly be questioned that the standardisation of ministry was the means of expressing and safeguarding the unity and the discipline of the Church; and that, whatever may have been the nature and the circumstances of the early diversity, there emerged out of it

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

the widespread and uniform official ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons, which came to be regarded as of the *esse* of the Church, and various minor orders which were not so regarded.[1]

It is around the three orders, considered as a unity, and more particularly around the episcopate, considered as the indispensable channel of transmission, that the controversy over Apostolical succession has been waged. The phrase " the Apostolical succession " is often used as the most convenient one for expressing the belief that in and through the historic episcopate the Church possesses an unbroken line of ministerial succession from the Apostles' days; but this general belief embraces varied interpretations of the nature, the significance and the importance of the alleged fact.

One of the most recent statements of these different conceptions is provided in Dr. Headlam's *Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion*, and for a thorough treatment of the subject I refer my readers to that book.[2] He tells us that the doctrine of Apostolical succession has passed through three stages.[3] The earliest conception was that of a succession of rulers each lawfully appointed to his office. It was a succession of men holding the office of bishop, and following the doctrine of their predecessors. The essence of this earliest conception is to be found, not in transmission, but in succession.

Somewhat later the bishops began to be spoken of more directly as the successors of the Apostles, in the sense that they performed the functions of the Apostles. " There can be no doubt that in this sense the con-

[1] See Headlam, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
[2] See esp. pp. 124 ff., 261 ff.
[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 124 ff.

ception has been held in the Church from the third century onwards."

The third interpretation is that " it was intended that there should be in each generation an authoritative stewardship of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and a recognised power to transmit it derived from above by Apostolic descent "; [1] and that means that transmission, in and through the episcopate, in unbroken succession from the Apostles, is essential for valid ministry. Of this interpretation Dr. Headlam writes: " So far as I am able to judge, it was not held at all in the early Church "; [2] and he indicates the vital character of this change of conception in the following words: " Orders in the ancient Church depended upon the Church. Orders in the medieval Church depended upon the bishop. In the early Church episcopal ordination was necessary because the bishop was the person appointed by the Church to perform its functions. In the medieval and modern Church the idea has grown up that the Church depends upon the due ordination of bishops." [3]

It is this vital difference that constitutes one of the problems of reunion, and when the Pope is substituted for the episcopate we have another. It is a matter about which we cannot remain neutral, and I must attempt to state a position.

In the earliest days there was no one prescribed and exclusive organisation of ministry; but there were the

[1] Dr. Gore, *The Church and the Ministry*, p. 59, quoted by Dr. Headlam, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 162. Dr. Headlam's position is in line with that of Hooker (*Eccl. Pol.* VII. 14), Laud (*Conference with Fisher*, XXXIX. 7), Cosin (see letter to Cordel in *Two Treatises on the Church*, Elliot Stock, 1901, pp. 186 ff.).

beginnings of a gradually evolving system, which tended more and more to the relating of ministerial commission to administrative office. The goal of that movement is to be found in the later established usage of the Church—namely, bishops, presbyters and deacons—with the bishop as the indispensable, though not exclusive, agent for the transmission or conferring of office. The episcopal succession, which I am prepared to describe as Apostolic, in the sense in which the three orders can be so described, and to regard as the effect of divine guidance, fulfilled for centuries the function of safeguarding order, regularity and unity, and was a conspicuous expression of continuity. This function was seriously modified by the schism between the East and the West, and again, and still more seriously, by the break-up of external unity that took place at and since the Reformation. But the jealous safeguarding of the historic episcopate by the episcopal Communions is preserving an element of Church life which, by virtue of its inherent value and historical claim, seems to be destined to become once again the possession of a united Christendom: but, before that can be, defects in its presentments have to be rectified, and the indivisible unity of the Spirit must be so universally recognised that nothing short of manifested union will satisfy the Christian conscience.[1]

In the meantime, in the present divided state of Christendom, the responsibility for which belongs to every section, it must be recognised that the ministry

[1] "A divided Church belies its own Creed. It warns the world against its own Gospel. Our thought still moves in a fatally false atmosphere. We have come to regard as normal and inevitable that against which about half of the New Testament is a passionate and sustained appeal." F. R. Barry, in *The Guardian*, June 28th, 1929.

duly authorised in the non-episcopal Communions has been manifestly used by God for the purposes of ministry. "By their fruits ye shall know them." However irregular they may be according to the episcopalian's standard, when judged by Christ's rule it is obvious that neither they nor the Communions which have given authority to them have been cut off from the unity of the Spirit. Irregular, perhaps; but the reply to that charge is that grace regularises its own channels. Priesthood (the word being used here in distinction from Presbyterate) in the Christian Church is the prerogative of all its members,[1] and the only sense in which "priest" (again as distinguished from "presbyter") can be used distinctively of the Christian minister (though it is not once so used in the Apostolic writings) is that of the representative of the priestly Body, who has been called of God, and set apart by the Body for this representative ministry.[2] If the condition of the Body were ideal, this representative priesthood would have the authority of the whole Body. In the existing divided condition of Christendom all such priesthood has only sectional authority, and is relatively defective.[3] Whatever the degree of defect may be, the main point is that the duly authorised ministers in a society of priests, no matter what title is given to their office, are exercising a representative priesthood.

[1] See Lightfoot's dissertation on the Christian Ministry in his *Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 184 ff.

[2] It is not insignificant that, whereas in the English form of the Articles the word "priest" fulfils its dual function as designation of the ministry and as title of the second order, in the Latin form its equivalent in the latter case is "presbyterus." It is only when it is used to designate the three orders (see title and text of Article XXXII.) or as a technical term of medieval doctrine (see Article XXXI.) that the equivalent is "sacerdos."

[3] See O. C. Quick, *The Christian Sacraments*, pp. 143 ff.

The Principle of Accommodation

If the condition of the Church had been ideal, there would not have been schism in it; but if external unity and continuity of order and organisation could have been maintained only at the cost of life and truth, schism may have become a duty and irregularity a necessity. The breaking up of external unity may be a lesser evil than the extinguishing of life by the authority and power of undivided Christendom.

We touch here upon a large matter of principle which calls for examination. Let us approach it under the form of questions. Does the divine appointment necessarily and in all circumstances involve exclusiveness or even permanence? Is there any conditional element in the character of the plans of God? Supposing that man, through ignorance, stupidity or presumption, renders an institution that has been ordained by God useless or insufficient for His purpose, what are we to believe about it: that the purpose of God will fail, or that He can and will fulfil it through other instrumentality?

The history of Israel should suffice for confirmation of the reply that reason dictates to such questions. The establishment of the monarchy, for example, is represented in the Old Testament as divine accommodation to the sin of Israel.[1] The schism made by Jeroboam is represented as a divinely ordered departure from original plan.[2] Prophets speaking under the inspiration of God denounced forms of worship which claimed divine appointment. It is a patent fact that it was the prophets who kept the religion of Israel alive when the

[1] 1 Sam. viii. 7 ff.; Hosea xiii. 11.
[2] 1 Kings xi. 11 ff., 29 ff.; xii. 24.

hierarchial succession stood for ceremonialism divorced from spiritual content and even from morality; and in those circumstances they not only denounced the hierarchy, but went further, and proclaimed the divine abhorrence of the very system of worship which had originated by divine order.[1] The sacred word "sacrifice" had been evacuated of spiritual content, and the Lord Himself puts the seal of His approval upon the words of Hosea, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice,"[2] in which he repudiated ordinances that had been ordained to foreshadow the essence of the incarnate revelation. John the Baptist did not hesitate to tell the Jews of his day that "God was able of these very stones to raise up children unto Abraham," a statement which meant nothing less than that God could maintain the succession of His people, and fulfil the promises made to Abraham, without paying any regard to the only means of succession that the Church of the old covenant recognised.

It was over this principle that St. Paul and his Judaising opponents waged their conflict. He proclaimed that the whole system of the Jewish hierarchy and its ordinances had been abolished, because the reality which they had foreshadowed was in Jesus Christ;[3] they claimed that their system and ordinances were of divine appointment, and therefore of permanent obligation. For the Judaisers, succession to Abraham, and the consequent participation in the blessings promised to his seed, were determined by membership of Israel, either through birth or through sacramental

[1] See Isa. i. 11 ff.; Amos v. 21 ff.
[2] Ch. vi. 6. See St. Matt. ix. 13.
[3] See Romans x. 4; Gal. v., vi.; cf. Heb. viii.–x.

incorporation. For St. Paul, the only succession to Abraham that ultimately counted was determined by participation in his faith.[1] "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love."

The importance of this principle in the matter of institutions evolved in the Church must not be overlooked; for if it has to be conceded that divine appointment does not necessarily involve permanence, still less exclusive claim, the fact that we episcopalians believe that the divine sanction can be claimed for the episcopal succession ought not to be regarded by us as ruling out the possibility of recognising other forms of ministry.[2] For the purpose of discussion, we might even assume that the papal claim to Petrine succession is logically invulnerable, and still reserve to ourselves the liberty of believing that, on account of the failures of the papal system, the Church and the ministry in the Church have been rendered by divine providence independent of the Papacy. Before we make exclusive claim to validity for any particular organisation of

[1] See Romans ii.–iv.; Gal. ii., iii., vi. 15 ff.

[2] Dr. Headlam yields to nobody in his advocacy of episcopacy on these two grounds: (1) that it has far greater authority than any other form; (2) that experience has shown that, whatever defects there have been or may be in certain presentments of episcopacy, it really forms the best basis for Christian unity; but he prefaces his argument in favour of it with a statement of the deduction which he regards as the only possible one that the evidence permits, and that is, "It was not intended that any particular form should be essential. The Church should freely create its own ministry, and might presumably also change at some future time what it had created, or adapt it to new conditions. We cannot therefore say that any form is essential to enable it to be called a Church, nor are we entitled to say that any particular Christian society has no claims to be considered a part of the Church because it has not a particular form of ministry." *Op. cit.*, p. 242.

ministry, we ought to satisfy ourselves that it adequately fulfils the revealed purpose, and that other forms have not been raised up and regularised under the guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit.

It is the belief of the Church of England that we in England were compelled on the major grounds of truth and liberty to reject the papal claims, and to repudiate the papal yoke, and so to increase the breach in Christendom already existing through the schism of East and West. The inevitable reaction that took place, when a large part of Europe broke the nursery strings, led to regrettable departures from historic order; but the leaders of reform in England were not forced to choose between retaining the Apostolic succession of ministry and regaining the heritage of Apostolic truth. They were, however, forced into a breach with the Papacy; and once a breach in unity had been made, repetition became a matter of less moment; and in the course of time nonconformity, which had been practised at first only by the remnant that remained attached to the Papacy, established itself in organised Protestant forms. The whole business was the outcome of sinfulness; but who, apart from the Church that claims infallibility, will attempt to assign the entire responsibility? The one certain thing is that, in the words of the imagery used by our Lord, new wine cannot be contained in old wineskins. The new wine, like the old, may have impurities mingled with it; but, if it is to be preserved, it must be contained in new wineskins. At and after the Reformation new forces of light and life were at work, and they required new forms and new methods. The Church of Rome did its best at the Reformation, and the Church of

England did its best after the Reformation, to repress them, but in each case repression only served to increase schism.

The outstanding feature of the schisms in Christendom is that the Church has not been prepared with sufficient alertness to adapt itself to new conditions and to make room for new forces; and in those circumstances the retention of external unity could only have been secured by success in the work of repression. This would have meant that the authority of undivided Christendom was successfully employed to resist new movements of the Spirit.[1]

It may well be that the long experience of divisions has been necessary in order that the Church may learn the true nature and basis of unity; and while it is obvious that the Church as a whole is not yet ready for the healing of the breaches, it is equally obvious that there is a deep-rooted movement which has the restoration of unity as its goal. This movement towards unity, and away from the separatist spirit that makes fellowship dependent upon similarity of opinion and expres-

[1] When I try to read the meaning of the Salvation Army, I find in it a reaction of vast dimensions and amazing vitality from the rigid centralisation of institutional religion. Its indebtedness to institutional Christianity covers the whole period that links its life up to the Apostolic age; nevertheless, as a separate organisation it goes on its way with phenomenal growth, in independence of the ministry and the Sacraments, sustained through its love of the Bible, prayer, fellowship, witnessing and Christian social work. Officialism is limited to administrative functions; the whole Army is a vast company of witnesses. We rarely hear the refinements of theology from their lips; the content of their message is testimony to the Lord Jesus, and what He has done and is doing for them. I am not dealing here with the question as to how we are to think of this movement of the Spirit in relation to the Body of Christ: I am only concerned to read the lesson or the warning that is presented by the fact of its development in independence of historic order.

sion, is the product, not of the sacerdotal claim that prefers to silence men rather than to recognise the emergence of new channels of grace, but of the readiness to welcome all the variety and enrichment that the Spirit of God owns and uses; and we cannot allow ecclesiastical precedent to keep us for ever standing in the position of Gamaliel.[1]

Again, it may well be that the long experience of division has been necessary in order that the Church may learn more of the fulness of the riches of divine grace, and of the manifold variety of the manner and effect of the activity of the Holy Spirit.[2] If so, the movement towards unity will be a movement away from rigid uniformity of interpretation and expression. Uniformity leads to fellowship, it is true, but it is a fellowship that is inevitably sectional. The more the attempt to define is indulged, the less probability is there of widespread agreement. There can be no question, for example, about the preserving of the historic episcopate; but if the vision of restored unity is to be realised, it must be equally certain that the Church is not committed to a particular interpretation or doctrine of episcopacy, any more than it is committed to a particular theory of the inspiration of the Holy Scripture, or of the supernatural in the Sacraments.

[1] See Acts iii., iv.

[2] "What is at stake here is what God is like, and what is His will for the human race. If it be true that God's eternal purpose is so far and irrevocably committed to one form of ministry and government that no other can be instrumental to it, there is nothing more to say. . . . At a time when, every year and every week, God is giving to men new disclosures of His unsearchable power and glory, we cannot believe, without further question, that the whole content of the divine purpose is expressed by any institution of past history, however glorious and however strong." F. R. Barry, in *The Guardian*, July 12th, 1929.

If this is regarded as involving a new conception of Catholic order, I would adopt in reply the following words: " One great difficulty has been that Catholic Order (which we all reverence) has become mixed up with some theological theories about which many scholars are dubious, and which seem to some of us definitely unworthy of the Christian conception of God. It would be a gain, if it could be made clear that Catholic Order is only concerned to safeguard certain things in practice. How these things may be interpreted is left to the individuals concerned: all that matters is that they should be done. . . . Nothing has proved such a disruptive force as the queer passion for definition with which so many Christians are afflicted." [1]

The failure of " Catholicism " (with the connotation that the word usually bears to-day) to preserve the unity of the Church is such that no greater misconception could be entertained than that there is any practical unity of those sections of Christendom which proclaim most loudly their catholicity. Wherever we look, the plain fact has to be faced that the society, whose witness depends, according to the teaching of its divine Lord, upon the mutual love and manifested unity of its members, has become a conglomeration of separated units, and in its mission to the world is a dividing factor among men, through these several units extending their membership.

As things are, we have to think of Christians fighting with one another in the holy places of Jerusalem: a recurrent experience that should have been a nightmare to the consciences of those concerned. We have

[1] F. R. Barry, in *The Guardian*, July 12th, 1929.

to think of the civil power in Uganda being compelled to keep the peace between Christians, by mapping out the country into concessions for the Anglican and the Roman missions. We have to think of the leaders of Indian aspirations for national unity finding that new factors of division are introduced in proportion to the success that attends the work of the various Christian missions.

Over against such facts as these, we have to set the nature of our divisions, and the reasons that prevent manifested fellowship, such as: claims to infallibility; theories of Apostolical succession, and regulations depending on them; question as to whether or how the Lord tabernacles in the consecrated elements of the Holy Communion, and whether those people who do the action which the Lord instituted can really fulfil the service and enjoy the blessing which He intended, unless the consecration of the elements be performed by a priest who has been ordained in a certain way; questions as to whether infants should be brought to holy baptism, and whether the rite of confirmation is a suitable following of the Apostles. These are all questions of importance, but at least for most of them the best prospect of solution seems to lie in a comprehensiveness that allows elasticity and mutual edification.

In the days that are past the separations had to arise, in order that even necessary liberty might be secured; in the days that are coming the separations must be brought to an end, in order that liberty may be related to comprehensive unity. This can be done if the Churches recover the spirit of the Apostolic age, " the faith in the Holy Spirit and His perpetual guid-

ance, which was too strong" to prescribe ordinances that would be permanently binding on the Church,[1] and the courageous outlook that can accommodate ecclesiastical precedents to new conditions in which the normal activity of the Holy Spirit is no longer determined by the limits which those precedents at one time more truly represented.

A leader in the Church, who has examined the problem as it is presented both at home and abroad, has written as follows:—

> "Hitherto our outlook has been on the past. When we speak of Catholicism, we mean the traditions and customs of the past. But henceforth our outlook must be on the future. Catholicism is seen as a goal to which we are reaching forward. The honour and glory of half the great races of the world have still to be brought in to the city of God. We cannot, at a time like this, be sure that the experience of the past will be a sure guide to God's will in the present and the future. We are very much in the same position as St. Peter was at Joppa in the house of Cornelius. We have a solemn warning in the fate of the Jewish nation. They were confronted with a mighty movement of the Spirit of God, first in Jesus of Nazareth, and then in the Christian Church. Their rigid adherence to the traditions of the past blinded their eyes. The Christian Church went triumphantly forward; but the Jewish Church perished." [2]

[1] See Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 230.

[2] Dr. Henry Whitehead, formerly Bishop of Madras. See *The Guardian*, July 26th, 1929.

IV

THE HISTORICAL CAUSES OF DIVISION

By The Most Rev. F. W. Head, D.D., Archbishop of Melbourne.

THE best way in which to understand the divisions among Christians to-day is to trace their historical origins in the past. If the Church is a living organism there must be changes in organisation and in the expression of belief in the course of time. That involves a conflict between those who see the need for change and those who fear and distrust it. Both sides appeal to the guidance and inspiration of God, and the question is how far each is guided by the Holy Spirit in so doing. St. Paul in resisting Judaism, Wycliffe in resisting Indulgences, and John Bunyan in resisting the Church of his day, all claimed the guidance of God in their resistance to authority. When divisions in the Church have occurred, the beaten party is not necessarily in the wrong, nor the triumphant party in the right. The history of the Church shows that it has sometimes been necessary to correct mistakes, and that heretics were often defenders of a truth that they realised more clearly than the Church of their day.

When such conflicts come, a further problem arises as to the authority which should settle the dispute. Is it to be a religious autocrat, such as an infallible Pope with power to use force to check opposition? Is it to

be a council which decides by a majority, and uses only persuasion to bring men to obey its decisions? Or is the appeal to be the recorded acts and decisions of an unalterable past?

Christian Unity in the Middle Ages

The Church began as a body of the disciples of our Lord bound together by loyalty to Him and love for one another. These men were Jews, and at once the problem of their relationship with the Gentile world had to be faced; and, thanks mainly to St. Paul, it was solved by the inclusion of the Gentiles, if they had faith in Christ. The gradual conversion of the Roman Empire followed, and the sign that it was partially accomplished was the recognition of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine in 312. For a century and a half the Empire was Christian and the Church united, but the one had to struggle against the barbarians and the other against the Arians. In 476 the Empire in the West collapsed, but the four general councils, the last of which was held at Chalcedon in 451, had produced the Nicene Creed, which, in dependence on the Bible, laid down the fundamental belief of the Church.

This is the really Catholic period when the Church was becoming universal and was arriving at a comprehensive theology by the rejection of Christological heresies. The period from 500 to 1500 is medieval rather than catholic, for the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West made common action and united consultation impossible. In the East the Empire at Constantinople was gradually diminishing in face of its enemies. There was one marked difference in the activity of the Church East and West. In the West it

displayed missionary zeal and converted the barbarians, with the result that western and central Europe became Christian. In the East it lacked missionary enthusiasm, and in consequence Western Asia and North Africa were lost alike to the Empire and the Church. Anything like catholic or united action on the part of the Church was very difficult after 476, and practically impossible after the Mohammedan triumphs between 634 and 650. For practices or beliefs common to the whole Church we are thrown back to the period of the first four general councils.

Gradually East and West drifted apart in belief, in practice and in worship. In the eighth century came the great iconoclastic controversy over the worship to be paid to images. The coronation of Charles the Great as Emperor of the West in 800 was regarded as an act of usurpation by the Emperors at Constantinople, and it therefore widened a breach which the handing over of the Exarchate of Ravenna to the Pope did nothing to heal. In 1054 the quarrel was completed by the mutual excommunications of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope. In 1204 the seizure of Constantinople by a western army in the Fourth Crusade made reunion almost impossible. Negotiations for reunion were discussed from time to time, and especially at Florence in 1439. But in 1453 Constantinople fell before the Turks, and ever since then the two Churches, the Catholic in the West and the Orthodox in the East, have remained separate, neither really catholic nor really orthodox without the other.

There were three outstanding facts in the Latin Church of the West between 500 and 1500. The first of these was the Papacy. Some process of centralisa-

tion was inevitable if the Church was to survive the chaos which followed the collapse of the Roman Empire. From the time of the coronation of Charles the Great in 800 the theory of the Holy Roman Empire was growing up to explain the process which was taking place. God ruled the world through the Emperor His Vicegerent in the secular sphere and the Pope His Vicegerent in the religious sphere. After the middle of the eleventh century this co-operation changed to hostility, till the Papacy brought about the collapse of the Empire in 1268, and became more and more an autocracy in the Church.

A second characteristic of these centuries was the celibacy of the priesthood, which made monasticism the ideal religious life. The clergy became a caste separated from the laity by an impassable barrier, and the secular priest in his parish was regarded as less religious than the regular priest in the monastery. The layman was held to be on a lower religious plane altogether. Yet the failure of one monastic order after another showed the falseness of this theory. At the end of this period most of the scandals and the need for moral reform in the Church were traceable to the principle of celibacy.

A third fact was the insistence on orthodoxy. This centred round the Mass, the essence of which was the repetition of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ by the priest at the consecration of the bread and wine. The doctrine of transubstantiation, urged by Lanfranc in 1070 and authorised by the Lateran Council in 1215, declared that at the consecration by the priest the substance of the bread and wine was changed to the body and blood of Christ, though the outward appearance, or "acci-

dents," remained unchanged. This was the daily miracle performed by the priest, and it made him the intermediary between God and man. Attendance at this sacrifice was the chief obligation for the Christian layman. The few learned thinkers worked out the system of Christian philosophy known as Scholasticism, but always within a definite area of thought. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura speculated about God and man, but always within the limits prescribed by the Church. Freedom of thought was regarded as dangerous, and persecution and force were considered legitimate means of checking heresy.

By the end of the fifteenth century this whole system had been tried and found wanting. Nowhere was the sense of the need for reform so strong as in England. The Papacy found itself more and more opposed by the growing sense of nationality. The maintenance of the authority of the Popes had always prevented the rise of a national kingdom in Italy and Germany. For seven centuries they had strengthened themselves by political means, and their spiritual authority had been degraded in consequence. In England William I. set limits to the papal authority, Edward I. threw over the tyranny of the Pope by calling in the aid of Parliament, and Edward III. checked the papal claims alike in patronage and in the hearing of appeals. Nationality in England was seen at its best in its relations with Rome.

Monasticism was strong in England, as elsewhere, but the best answer to the claims of celibacy was the high standard of married life which was common throughout the country. The monarchy of William I., Henry II. and Edward I. maintained good order, so that feudalism

only at rare intervals bore hardly on the peasants. The middle classes were powerful in many chartered cities. The rule of primogeniture made the younger sons of noble families leaders of the people. The early growth of Parliament developed the practice of self-government. Home life was on the whole safer and happier here than elsewhere.

Orthodox doctrine found many critics in England. The most daring among the Scholastics were the Englishmen Roger Bacon, William of Ockham, and John Wycliffe, who denied transubstantiation in the fourteenth century. The Renaissance in the fifteenth century brought in Greek culture from Constantinople after its fall before the Turks in 1453. Everywhere the newer knowledge of the pagan Greek classics disturbed the old Latin Christian beliefs. In England the study of the Greek Testament exposed the errors of the medieval Church and gave a new inspiration to education in the universities and schools.

The old Catholic system of the Latin Church had bound together Western Europe for seven hundred years. But by 1500 its organisation, its priesthood and its beliefs were being questioned by Europe, and especially by England. How would it answer the test?

The Reformation and the Divided Church

Suddenly an awkward question was asked by Martin Luther in 1517. Is all this Catholic system true? Pope Leo X. wanted to rebuild St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome, and sent out pardoners who sold indulgences to raise the money. So much money would obtain so much relief from purgatory. To Luther this meant

justification by money, and he resisted it because he had just learnt that justification was by faith only. With him the vague questionings of the Renaissance became the clearer religious demand of the Reformation.

Towards the system of the Catholic Church four great leaders on the Continent adopted different attitudes, and the result was the Reformation. Three of them demanded reform, and based their demands on Holy Scripture, by which they declared that the existing Church stood condemned. Erasmus, the humanist, represented the spirit of the Renaissance, and he wished gradually by education to change the narrow Latin beliefs of the Middle Ages by the influence of the Greek Testament. Luther in Germany was a conservative reformer who wished to remove from the organisation and belief of the Church anything which he found to be condemned by the Bible. Calvin in Geneva set up a new Church in place of the old on a presbyterian instead of an episcopal basis, because he regarded the Catholic Church as contrary to the teaching of Scripture. The fourth continental leader was Ignatius Loyola, who founded the Order of the Jesuits to maintain the existing Church in all its medieval completeness as against all change of doctrine or organisation.

The really determining factor in the religious future of Europe was the Papacy. A series of Popes, or even a single Pope who was honestly anxious for truth in doctrine and holiness of life, might have led the Church of the Middle Ages into the larger life of modern times by the light shed on the problems of the day by the re-discovery of the New Testament. But none of the Popes of the later fifteenth or earlier

sixteenth century could have considered such a course of action for a moment. For the power of the Papacy rested less on its spiritual authority than on politics and a worldly diplomacy. When the demand for reform came, these Popes cared only for their own maintenance, instead of for the good of the Church. For this end every means, whether force or intrigue or persecution, was justifiable. For the century while the reform of the Catholic Church hung in the balance the Papacy set its face against all change. It saved itself, but at the cost of the Church of which it was the visible head.

Probably the best way of dealing with the problem of reform would have been to hold a general council in which the questions raised by Luther in 1517 could have been discussed. This was the one remedy which from the first the Popes refused to consider. Their experience of such councils in the fifteenth century was enough to make them resolute opponents of such bodies in the future. But this was the remedy which the Emperor Charles V (1519–1556), as ruler of Germany, wished to try. After many failures, a council finally met at Trent in 1562, but there were no Lutherans present, and it only dealt with the Catholics, and registered the mediæval beliefs unchanged. The unreformed Catholic Church of the Middle Ages continued as the Roman Catholic Church, with the Lutherans and Calvinists left outside as Protestants.

If the general council had failed to deal with the problem of reform by persuasion there remained the alternative method of force, whether carried out by persecution or by war. This is the method which was tried in the Counter Reformation, which after the

death of Charles V. made its great effort to crush out the Reformation. The Popes Pius IV., Pius V. and Gregory XIII., supported by Philip II. of Spain and the Guises in France, and backed by all the fervour of the Jesuits and the cruelty of the Inquisition, seemed likely to succeed. Protestantism was ruthlessly crushed out in Italy and Spain. In France religious war between the Catholics and the Protestant Huguenots began in 1562, and was embittered by the massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572. In 1589 the Protestant King Henry IV. became a Catholic, in order to conform to the religion of the majority of his subjects, but the Edict of Nantes gave toleration to the Huguenots in 1598 and built up a united and prosperous France. In the Low Countries the cruelty of Philip II. and of the Duke of Alva led in 1572 to the revolt of the Dutch. As the result of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 Roman Catholicism in southern Europe and Protestantism in northern and central Europe faced each other, divided by the bitter memories of nearly a century of war. The Catholic Church, which had refused even to consider reform by a general council, must take the blame for the divisions of Christendom which resulted. Religious war as a remedy for heresy had failed.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries England shared in the religious movements of the time, yet always with her own special features. The influence of the four religious leaders of the Continent was felt here too. The humanism of Erasmus inspired Wolsey and the young Henry VIII., when it seemed as if the Catholic Church in England would meet the need for reform by the education of the clergy. Ipswich School and Cardinal College at Oxford were a good

beginning. But the divorce of Henry made a breach with the Papacy inevitable, and on the fall of Wolsey Henry drew nearer to the Lutherans, whose influence was seen in the Ten Articles of 1536. Was Catholicism possible without the Pope and with an open Bible? Henry made the experiment, and then, in fear of Lutheranism, from 1539 till his death in 1547, drew back and accepted all the medieval doctrines except the papal supremacy. In the reign of Edward VI. the influence of Luther and Calvin is seen in the two Prayer Books. Here the debt we owe to Archbishop Cranmer is incalculable. He was essentially a scholar who realised the distinction between what was catholic and what was medieval. He tried to keep the one and was ready to give up the other. The Book of Common Prayer is his gift to the Church. With the reign of Mary the influence of Ignatius Loyola became powerful. There was a violent reaction in favour of the complete medieval Church with the papal supremacy. With her Spanish husband, Philip II., she tried to hand over England to the Counter Reformation. But her persecutions made success impossible.

With Elizabeth the Church in England became the Church of England. By her settlement in 1559 the Church remained Catholic by its maintenance of episcopacy, with Parker as Archbishop. The Apostolical succession was in danger, but was preserved intact, whereby the continuity of the Church was secured, though not its connection with the Papacy. The Prayer Book preserved catholicity in worship while seeking to avoid the errors of the Middle Ages. The Bible in English provided the basis of doctrine. The Thirty-nine Articles, passed by Convocation in 1563,

set forth the doctrine of the Church on far more Catholic lines than those promulgated at the same moment by the Council of Trent.

This is the Anglican *via media* between the extremes of Protestantism, which has given up the catholic episcopate, and Roman Catholicism which has made the bishops, not the successors of the Apostles, but the agents of the Pope. For a time the Counter Reformation led by Philip II. tried to win the England of Elizabeth back to communion with the Pope by means of Mary Queen of Scots. But neither plots nor Jesuit propaganda nor attempted assassination succeeded. After the defeat of the Armada in 1588 England was left in peace, but outside the unity of the unreformed Catholic Church whose head was the Pope.

The extreme Protestants in England were the Calvinistic Puritans, who resisted the Church Settlement of 1559 as not going far enough. But while Elizabeth lived they accepted it under protest. The real struggle came under the Stuarts in the seventeenth century. More and more the dispute raged round episcopacy. Would the solution be found in a council, or by force, as on the Continent? James I. would make no concessions. The Hampton Court Conference in 1604 was called in order to discuss the differences between the Anglicans and the Puritans, but nothing was done, as there was no real desire to understand the Puritan point of view. Charles I. defended the Church against all attacks, and rather than betray it he lost his life. Archbishop Laud was the champion of episcopacy and of uniformity of worship as the guarantees of the catholicity of the Church, but made the double mistake of resting on the King for his authority and of enforcing

his regulations by persecution. In the Civil War 1642–1649 Church and monarchy were beaten, and triumphant Puritanism under Cromwell set up a republic and established first Presbyterianism and then Congregationalism, and drove out many Anglicans from their livings. At the Restoration in 1660 the monarchy and the Church came back again. But the Church in its moment of triumph made in its turn the mistake of persecuting the Puritans. In 1661 it had an opportunity of winning them back by reasonable concessions at the Savoy Conference. But, as in 1604, the conciliatory spirit was absent. The bishops, sitting as judges in their own case, condemned the Puritans as schismatics. Nearly two thousand clergymen therefore refused to obey the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and started Nonconformity as a body outside the Church, instead of remaining as a group inside who criticised some of its doctrines and practices. In 1689 the period of struggle between the Church of England and the Puritans ended with the Toleration Act, which gave the Nonconformists freedom of worship in chapels, but by the maintenance of the Corporation Act of 1661 and the Test Act of 1673 retained their political and municipal disabilities.

Alike on the Continent and in England, the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages had to meet the demand for reform in doctrine and life prompted by the Renaissance and the knowledge of the Greek Testament. On the Continent the Church, led by the Papacy, refused to change, and thereby made inevitable the separate Churches which believed that their organisation and worship were more true to the Bible and to the mind of Christ than those of the Church. In England the

Church, though rejected by the Church of Rome, remained catholic and episcopal, but reformed itself by rejecting what was only medieval and papal. But here again, the defence of Catholicism as embodied in episcopacy was based on force, and therefore failed. The Hampton Court Conference and the Savoy Conference were not meant to bring about Christian reunion, any more than the Council of Trent. After 1563 in Europe and 1662 in England the unity of the Church was broken and the divisions grew more impassable as the generations went by. Yet it is difficult to regard Protestantism, whether on the Continent or in England, as something purely negative or a mere opposition to the Catholic Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a time of religious change, when belief and organisation were being tested and criticised, and men had to make up their minds as to truth and right. The Catholic Church was in need of reform: there can be no question about that. Many loyal and earnest men would willingly have stayed in it if only there were any signs of real reform. But all appeals failed, and the abuses and superstitions continued. What was to be done?

The only thing that could be done was to go behind the Church and appeal to the Bible, which recorded the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, as the test of truth, and to a man's conscience as the final arbiter of conduct. Luther, Calvin and Cranmer did not desire to break away from the Church of their day; but they were driven forth because the Church, led by the Papacy, regarded all change of thought as heresy and all change of organisation as schism.

Puritanism in England was typical of this attitude

towards the Church. The Elizabethan Church of England might in the seventeenth century have retained the Puritans if it had been wisely led. But James I., Charles I. and Laud refused to see that these men stood for a positive ideal behind all their stubborn resistance on apparently unimportant matters, like kneeling in church and the wearing of the surplice. The Puritan had learnt from Calvin the doctrine of election, which meant that he realised that God had called him to know, serve, follow and above all to obey Him, and no ordinance or ritual mattered as against that divine call. The saintship of the laity is the secret of the Puritan faith, and it is something that is vital to English Christianity. To the Puritan it was bound up with his belief in his election. The Church made other demands upon him which he did not believe were authoritative. These two ideals of Christianity were not incompatible or irreconcilable. But the Church met the Puritans, first by persecution and then by war, and both failed. The growing disunion of the Elizabethan period became the permanent schism of the seventeenth century.

The Expansion of Europe

The period of religious war ends in 1648. After the death of Louis XIV. of France, who made the mistake of revoking the Edict of Nantes in 1685, religion in the eighteenth century ceases to be the chief motive for political or military activity, and there follows the age of the enlightened despots, whose ideals were humanitarian rather than religious. Christianity was at a low ebb, and the Roman Catholic Church, under a series of Popes of no special capacity for leadership, acquiesced

in the weakness it had inherited, and made no effort to win back the Protestant Churches. A hundred years after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes came the French Revolution in 1789, and the Church in France was hardly able to withstand the shock of a movement which at first was definitely hostile to it. But Napoleon was on the side of Christianity as being a useful moral agent, and he restored the Catholic Church and the Protestant bodies to much of their old authority, though strictly under State control.

Very different was the case of England. For a time after 1689, under William III. and Marlborough, we fought as the leading Protestant power against the Roman Catholic aggression of Louis XIV. Then under the rule of Walpole (1720–1742) the country settled down to peace. In the later half of the eighteenth century England was changing from an agricultural into an industrial country, thanks to the inventions in the textile and other trades. A new population in the north and west was growing up beyond the reach of a Church which was quiescent, respectable and learned, but the nation was kept Christian by the preaching of John Wesley and the Methodists. Unfortunately the great society which they built up was too "enthusiastic" for the Church, and after its founder's death in 1791 the Methodist body seceded and formed a new and important addition to Nonconformity. The tragedy was that the Church made no effort to keep it. The bishops never consulted Wesley about his wonderful work, and were unfriendly to the Evangelicals within the Church. The spiritual level of the time was so low that this great Christian force was driven into schism.

Yet the Methodists, like the Puritans, were making a very definite contribution to English Christianity. The Church in the eighteenth century had almost changed Christianity to a philosophy, and by its insistence on what was reasonable had made any appeal to the emotions appear irrational. John Wesley's answer to the Church's dread of enthusiasm was his insistence on conversion. The individual soul was not dependent on certain ordinances for its consciousness of God, nor were those ordinances effective without that inner consciousness. Wesley and his followers at first longed to find within the Church that appeal to the emotions which for them was involved in the idea of love as applied to Jesus Christ. The Church rejected the appeal, and in the end the Methodists started a Church of their own, in which they were encouraged to love their Lord with their hearts as well as with their minds. That they stood and stand for a positive truth cannot be doubted. The Christianity of the bulk of the working classes in England in the last hundred and fifty years is the witness to this truth. The saintship of the laity in the eighteenth century was once more, as in the seventeenth, a living ideal. But its inspiration was not now the election of the individual and the fear of God, but the conversion of the individual and the love of Jesus Christ.

Thus the contrast between Europe and England at the beginning of the nineteenth century was noticeable. In Europe Christianity was weak after the experience of revolutionary France. In England Christianity was strong thanks to Methodism.

Meanwhile the prominence which religion had once held in the life of Europe had passed to Imperialism.

Europe, ever since in 1492 Columbus had discovered America, had been expanding east and west, and wherever the white man went, his race became dominant over the other races with which he came in contact. This expansion was to have important results later on the question of Christian unity. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Spaniards conquered South America, the Portuguese sailed to Africa and the East Indies, and the Dutch founded trading settlements in India and the East Indies. Then, as these European countries declined in the eighteenth century, the real struggle for territory overseas opened up between France and England. France had her settlements in Canada and India. England had increased her colonies, since the day of the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620, all along the east coast of North America south of the St. Lawrence, and the East India Company had its settlements in India. The Seven Years' War was the moment of decision. In 1757 Clive won North India at Plassey, and in 1759 Wolfe won Canada at Quebec. Those battles decided that England, and not France, was to be the leading country in the future expansion of Europe overseas. But there was no theory of Empire as yet. The purpose of foreign possessions or colonies was only to provide wealth for the mother country, to which they were absolutely subordinate. It was that policy which lost us the United States in 1783. Even worse than that was the encouragement of the slave trade in order to provide cheap labour for the British plantations in America and the West Indies. Yet in spite of its defects the British Empire grew, especially in the struggle with the French Revolution and Napoleon.

The British by 1815 had become the leading imperial race, thanks to their naval power. But they had done wonderfully little for the spread of Christianity. The Church of England could not expand because the policy of the Government at home in the eighteenth century, and the lack of religious enthusiasm among the bishops and the Puritan opposition in New England, prevented the extension of the episcopate overseas. Only when the North American colonies became independent in 1783 were the first bishops for the United States and for Canada consecrated. But where the Church had failed John Wesley had stepped in. Methodism had been growing fast in America, and in 1784 Methodist bishops for the United States were consecrated by Wesley, and the division between Anglicans and Wesleyans which was growing up in England was made permanent across the Atlantic because the Church had missed its imperial opportunity.

In the years between the Peace of Westphalia and the Battle of Waterloo the divisions caused by the Reformation and the religious wars had thus become permanent. Meanwhile Europe was expanding into Asia and America, and in the process Christianity was coming into contact with other religions. In both these movements, religious and imperial, England played a leading part. She was the only country where there was a real religious revival, and this had spread to her colonies in America. But it was accomplished at the cost of a fresh breach between the Church of England and Nonconformity. England, too, had territories scattered all over the world; but she had yet to learn how to make them into an Empire. The part which the British race was being trained by God to

play in the expansion of Europe was only to be made clear in the centuries to come.

The Problem of Christian Unity To-day

In the nineteenth century Europe was busy with the problems of nationality and democracy after the upheaval of the French Revolution. After 1815 the Holy Alliance, in fear of the recent past, set its face against liberty, lest it should lead to revolution, and tried to enforce Christianity as the guarantee of order. The revolutions of 1848 were the result, and in the second half of the century nationality with new freedom realised itself in Italy under Cavour, and in Germany under Bismarck. But the old divisions of Christianity remained. The Roman Catholic Church made Christian reunion with the Protestant Churches impossible by the promulgation of the doctrine of papal infallibility in 1870, which endorsed once more the whole of medieval Christianity as laid down at the Council of Trent. This made almost inevitable the refusal by this great branch of the Catholic Church of any official acceptance of new truth as it was being revealed by natural science and historical criticism. The Lutheran and Calvinistic Churches held to their old doctrines, but interpreted their meaning to meet the demands of new thought. Between the Churches of Europe therefore as they were left at the Reformation, there was no sign yet of reunion when the twentieth century dawned.

But in England the case was different. The work of John Wesley lasted on in a nation which faced the nineteenth century with a definite zeal for Christianity. In 1828 toleration of Nonconformity was completed by

the abolition of the Test Act and the Corporation Act, and in the following year Catholic Emancipation was granted. Here was a great opportunity for Christian reunion. The barriers to full toleration left in 1662 were broken down and the Church no longer held a position of political privilege. But unfortunately the chance was not taken.

In 1833 came the Tractarian Movement, when Keble and Newman and afterwards Pusey at Oxford sought to revive Christianity in England, by insisting on the catholic nature of the Church of England, which the Methodists and Evangelicals had partly forgotten in their emphasis on the conversion of individuals. In the *Tracts for the Times*, issued between 1833 and 1841, the writers showed the catholicity of the Church in its maintenance of episcopacy, and they stressed a doctrine of sacramental grace which could only be conferred by an episcopally ordained clergyman. This was their answer to the revolutionary, free-thinking danger of the time. They looked back in their defence of the Church, not only to the first four centuries to which Cranmer and the Reformers appealed, but also to the medieval period which followed.

They imagined an ideal Catholic Church without the Papacy and with a belief in the Real Presence of Christ instead of in transubstantiation. It was a grand ideal, and meant much for the Church in that it has produced a revival of worship and enthusiasm. But it suffered from two disadvantages. First, it is not true to history, because there was no time when this ideal Church existed. Secondly, the revival of what was medieval has made far more difficult the task of Christian reunion in the twentieth century. For the Church

of England the real task is to bring back to itself the Puritans and Methodists whom it ought never to have lost. To look back to the Middle Ages as the final authority for truth is to overlook all the development of Christianity in England since the Reformation and to deny the work of the Holy Spirit since 1529. As the Tractarian Movement developed, the division between the Church with its bishops and the Nonconformists widened. The burden of the schism was laid wholly on the Nonconformists. Yet the history of Christianity in England has shown how again and again the fault was at least as much due to the leaders of the Church as to their opponents.

The Evangelicals, like the Tractarians, look back to the past for the assurance of their catholicity, but they believe that the Church is Catholic because it has maintained what was maintained by the Reformers, and that it cannot become more Catholic by reviving what is merely medieval. Starting from the catholicity of Cranmer and Hooker, they see the guidance of God in the later developments of English Christianity, and they realise that without the contributions of Puritanism and Methodism their Christianity is incomplete. This attitude to the past is surely sound, because it is historical. It is also full of promise for the next step towards Christian reunion, for it believes that the Church has more in common with English Christians, who share its language, its Creeds, its Bible and its Sunday, than it has with Italians, Greeks or Copts simply because they have maintained episcopacy. Evangelicals are the heirs of the Methodist revival without its disruptive tendency. They had in Charles Simeon at Cambridge and in the Clapham

Sect in London great influence at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They lost it in the middle of the century because their emphasis on the verbal inspiration of the Bible made them distrust all constructive theology which recognised the claims of natural science and historical criticism. To-day many of them have realised that modern scholarship only adds to the grandeur of the divine and human Lord Whom they worship, and their influence is steadily growing.

As the nineteenth century went on, the need for closer union between Christians became clearer, in face of the apparent conflict between science and religion. Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* appeared in 1859, and at first the Church was dismayed by it. But Anglican and Presbyterian and other Christian scholars united to show that the new and the old truths were not antagonistic, but complementary. The Church could not excommunicate those who fought with it merely because they were not Anglicans.

The most urgent call to Christian unity to-day has come from the non-Christian world. During the nineteenth century missionary work had begun, and Anglicans and Free Churchmen alike were evangelising Asia, Africa and the islands of the seas. But each missionary was bringing his own branch of the Church to the heathen whom he converted. The divisions at home were being repeated abroad. In the twentieth century after the war the second stage of missionary work has been reached, and native Churches have been founded everywhere.[1] The passionate ideal of the new young nations is for nationality with independence in politics and religion, and a refusal to

[1] See Essay I.

perpetuate disunion by continuing the religious divisions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is the lesson to be learnt from the World Call Reports of 1926 and 1928.

The answer to this World Call is surely to be seen in the history of the expansion of Europe. The greatest power in touch with the heathen world to-day is the British Empire. It is the one Empire left since the war. It is called to-day in a special way to be the bearer of Christianity to the non-Christian world, because it is in contact with all the other great religions. The Church of England has been given freedom to readjust and reorganise itself by the creation of the Church Assembly in 1920. It has been provided with a message suited to the new needs of the world by the work of Anglican and other scholars in the last fifty years. At home the great call to the Church is the evangelisation of the working-classes. Abroad it is of profound importance to the world that the British type of character, which is the result of centuries of Christianity, should persist, in order to serve other and weaker races. God has called the British race to a great united Christian work in the world to-day. May He Who calls us make us worthy of His calling.

V

LAMBETH 1920

(*a*) An Anglican Presentation [1]

By The Rt. Rev. A. W. T. Perowne, D.D., Bishop of Bradford.

Any treatise on reunion by Anglicans must take account of the consideration given to the subject by the bishops of the Anglican Communion at their successive conferences held at Lambeth during the last sixty years. At the very first meeting, held in 1867, "the deep sorrow with which they view the divided condition of the flock of Christ throughout the world, ardently longing for the fulfilment of the prayer of our Lord" finds expression in the encyclical Letter issued by the conference. The next conference urged the Church to intercession for unity, and the gathering of 1888 was marked by the production of the famous "Lambeth Quadrilateral," a statement of the terms on which

[1] It may be useful to those who wish to study further the particular part of the subject treated in this chapter to give the authorities consulted by the writer:

Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion, 1920, Encyclical Letter. S.P.C.K.

The Five Lambeth Conferences. S.P.C.K.

Documents on Christian Unity, by G. K. A. Bell. Oxford University Press.

Lambeth and Reunion, by the Bishops of Peterborough, Zanzibar and Hereford. S.P.C.K.

The Church of England and The Free Churches, by G. K. A. Bell and W. L. Robertson, Oxford University Press.

reunion with other reformed Churches could be contemplated by Anglicans, viz. the acceptance of the Scriptures as the ultimate standard of faith and practice; the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal symbol, and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith; and the historic episcopate. Ten years later the bishops were stressing with greater definiteness their conviction of the "Divine purpose of visible unity amongst Christians as a fact of revelation," and in 1908 there emerges the idea which envisages, not the absorption of any one Church by another, not the reduction of all to a common denominator, but "the Great Church," [1] greater than any now existing in quality as well as in size, to which all the separated communions should contribute their special gifts. "We must fix our eyes on the Church of the future, which is to be adorned with all the precious things, both theirs and ours. We must constantly desire, not compromise but comprehension, not uniformity but unity."

Meanwhile aspirations had been cautiously turning into action, and friendly relations were established, and definite negotiations in some instances were carried on, by our bishops with the Eastern Churches, the old Catholics, the Scandinavian Church, and the Moravians. A new spirit of unity was being fostered, a new atmosphere, in which differences could be frankly and openly faced and discussed without bitterness and rancour.

It may truthfully be said that during the half century preceding the 1920 Lambeth Conference, there had

[1] The phrase is Bishop Palmer's in *The Great Church Awakes.*

been growing more and more clear, and chiefly through these decennial gatherings of the Anglican bishops, "an increasing perception and conviction of the Will of God in the matter, with a corresponding sense of the sin of our unhappy divisions; an increasingly candid appreciation of the work accomplished and the spiritual efficiency displayed by other communions than our own; an outspoken honesty which refuses to ignore the difficulties; a quiet determination to deal with facts rather than with emotions, and to countenance no compromise where real principle is at stake; but a growing readiness to make any sacrifice which, without disloyalty to our past, is calculated to advance the great cause which we have in hand." [1]

Such in briefest outline is the story of the progressive steps taken by the Anglican episcopate towards the solution of a particularly delicate and difficult problem, before the meeting at Lambeth in 1920. Meanwhile the pressure on the home Church from various parts of the mission field had become intensified, leading on the one hand to the remarkable Edinburgh Conference of 1910, and on the other to such compromises as that reached in the Kikuyu controversy. Finally the bishops met in the new atmosphere created by the war, which had produced a spirit of fellowship, felt not least by the chaplains of different denominations when faced by the grim realities and strange exigencies which forced them to value all externals at their true worth, and which at times laid bare the tragedy of exclusiveness, as when some chaplain felt himself compelled to refuse Communion to an unconfirmed patient in hospital.

[1] *Lambeth and Reunion*, S.P.C.K., 1920, p. 43.

Reunion was recognised as the most vitally important subject to be discussed by the bishops at the 1920 conference. It mattered little that the functions of the Lambeth Conference are most strictly limited to consultation, and that there is no claim or power residing in that body to legislate for any portion of the Anglican Communion. The moral weight of its decisions and resolutions is enormous, and the *Appeal for Unity* which resulted from its labours has been recognised universally as the authoritative voice of the Church of England on the subject, and we must consider it as such.

We have not space here to do more than give the full text of the Appeal itself, but it should be borne in mind that it forms only one resolution out of eight which deal with the subject, and that, for its full understanding and explanation, the passage in the encyclical letter which refers to it should be read, as well as the report of the committee (which covers thirty pages) on which the appeal and resolutions are based. It should be added that the Appeal received the approval of the 252 bishops assembled with a unanimity all but complete:

The Appeal To All Christian People

We, the Archbishops, Bishops Metropolitan, and other Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church in full communion with the Church of England, in Conference assembled, realising the responsibility which rests upon us at this time, and sensible of the sympathy and the prayers of many, both within and without our own Communion, make this appeal to all Christian people.

We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptised into the name of the Holy Trinity, as sharing with us membership in the

universal Church of Christ which is His Body. We believe that the Holy Spirit has called us in a very solemn and special manner to associate ourselves in penitence and prayer with all those who deplore the divisions of Christian people, and are inspired by the vision and hope of a visible unity of the whole Church.

I. We believe that God wills fellowship. By God's own act this fellowship was made in and through Jesus Christ, and its life is in His Spirit. We believe that it is God's purpose to manifest this fellowship, so far as this world is concerned, in an outward, visible and united society, holding one faith, having its own recognised officers, using God-given means of grace, and inspiring all its members to the world-wide service of the Kingdom of God. This is what we mean by the Catholic Church.

II. This united fellowship is not visible in the world to-day. On the one hand there are other ancient episcopal Communions in East and West, to whom ours is bound by many ties of common faith and tradition. On the other hand there are the great non-episcopal Communions, standing for rich elements of truth, liberty and life which might otherwise have been obscured or neglected. With them we are closely linked by many affinities, racial, historical and spiritual. We cherish the earnest hope that all these Communions, and our own, may be led by the Spirit into the unity of the Faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. But in fact we are all organised in different groups, each one keeping to itself gifts that rightly belong to the whole fellowship, and tending to live its own life apart from the rest.

III. The causes of division lie deep in the past, and are by no means simple or wholly blameworthy. Yet none can doubt that self-will, ambition and lack of charity among Christians have been principal factors in the mingled process, and that these, together with blindness to the sin of disunion, are still mainly responsible for the breaches of Christendom. We acknow-

ledge this condition of broken fellowship to be contrary to God's will, and we desire frankly to confess our share in the guilt of thus crippling the Body of Christ and hindering the activity of His Spirit.

IV. The times call us to a new outlook and new measures. The Faith cannot be adequately apprehended and the battle of the Kingdom cannot be worthily fought while the body is divided, and is thus unable to grow up into the fulness of the life of Christ. The time has come, we believe, for all the separated groups of Christians to agree in forgetting the things which are behind and reaching out towards the goal of a reunited Catholic Church. The removal of the barriers which have arisen between them will only be brought about by a new comradeship of those whose faces are definitely set this way.

The vision which rises before us is that of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all Truth, and gathering into its fellowship all " who profess and call themselves Christians," within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ. Within this unity Christian Communions now separated from one another would retain much that has long been distinctive in their methods of worship and service. It is through a rich diversity of life and devotion that the unity of the whole fellowship will be fulfilled.

V. This means an adventure of goodwill and still more of faith, for nothing less is required than a new discovery of the creative resources of God. To this adventure we are convinced that God is now calling all the members of His Church.

VI. We believe that the visible unity of the Church will be found to involve the whole-hearted acceptance of:—

The Holy Scriptures, as the record of God's revelation of Himself to man, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith; and the Creed commonly

called Nicene, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal confession of belief:

The divinely instituted Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion, as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ:

A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body.

VII. May we not reasonably claim that the Episcopate is the one means of providing such a ministry? It is not that we call in question for a moment the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communions which do not possess the Episcopate. On the contrary, we thankfully acknowledge that these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace. But we submit that considerations alike of history and of present experience justify the claim which we make on behalf of the Episcopate. Moreover, we would urge that it is now and will prove to be in the future the best instrument for maintaining the unity and continuity of the Church. But we greatly desire that the office of a bishop should be everywhere exercised in a representative and constitutional manner, and more truly express all that ought to be involved for the life of the Christian Family in the title of Father-in-God. Nay, more, we eagerly look forward to the day when, through its acceptance in a united Church, we may all share in that grace which is pledged to the members of the whole body in the apostolic rite of the laying-on of hands, and in the joy and fellowship of a Eucharist in which as one Family we may together, without any doubtfulness of mind, offer to the one Lord our worship and service.

VIII. We believe that for all the truly equitable approach to union is by the way of mutual deference to one another's consciences. To this end, we who send

forth this appeal would say that, if the authorities of other Communions should so desire, we are persuaded that, terms of union having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted, bishops and clergy of our Communion would willingly accept from these authorities a form of commission or recognition which would commend our ministry to their congregations, as having its place in the one family life. It is not in our power to know how far this suggestion may be acceptable to those to whom we offer it. We can only say that we offer it in all sincerity as a token of our longing that all ministries of grace, theirs and ours, shall be available for the service of our Lord in a united Church.

It is our hope that the same motive would lead ministers who have not received it to accept a commission through episcopal ordination, as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the whole fellowship.

In so acting no one of us could possibly be taken to repudiate his past ministry. God forbid that any man should repudiate a past experience rich in spiritual blessings for himself and others. Nor would any of us be dishonouring the Holy Spirit of God, Whose call led us all to our several ministries, and Whose power enabled us to perform them. We shall be publicly and formally seeking additional recognition of a new call to wider service in a reunited Church, and imploring for ourselves God's grace and strength to fulfil the same.

IX. The spiritual leadership of the Catholic Church in days to come, for which the world is manifestly waiting, depends upon the readiness with which each group is prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of a common fellowship, a common ministry and a common service to the world.

We place this ideal first and foremost before ourselves and our own people. We call upon them to make the effort to meet the demands of a new age with a new outlook. To all other Christian people whom our words may reach we make the same appeal. We do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be

absorbed in another. We do ask that all should unite in a new and great endeavour to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which He prayed.

It is important to call attention to those points in the Appeal which have commended it in such a remarkable degree to the Christian Church at large, and not least to the Liberal Evangelicals in our own Communion. There is the note of penitence for past disunion, attractive in itself as evidence of the grace of humility, and a necessary preliminary for new vision. There is the frank acknowledgment of the blessings vouchsafed to non-episcopal Communions, and of the spiritual efficacy of the Sacraments administered in them. The claim made for a constitutional episcopate as the one means of providing a ministry which can be universally acknowledged by the whole Church is made reasonably on the grounds of " history and of present experience," and is not based on any special theory of " Apostolical succession." The bishops also express their willingness, if necessary, to accept a form of commission for ministering acceptably in the reunited Church, not thereby implying a repudiation of their past ministry as in any way invalid, but indicating rather a desire for public and formal recognition of a call to wider service.

The Appeal is both in idea and method a new appeal. It is not merely based on the fact that God wills fellowship. It assumes that the unity which we seek exists; that the one Body exists; that the fellowship of the one Body exists, in ideal, and has to be discovered only in order that its activities may be set free. So, to quote the encyclical letter, " terms of

reunion must be judged by their correspondence to the common ideal of the Church as God would have it to be. . . . These elements of truth about which differences have arisen are essential to the fulness of the witness of the whole Church. It is not by reducing the different groups of Christians to uniformity, but by rightly using their diversity, that the Church can become all things to all men. So long as there is vital connection with the Head, there is positive value in the differentiation of the members . . . but their value for the fulness of the Christian life, truth and witness can only be realised if they are united in the fellowship of one visible Society, whose members are bound together by the ties of a common faith, common Sacraments, and a common ministry."

We rejoice at the splendour of the vision. It is an invitation to all the Churches to co-operate in a common endeavour to recover the unity which has been lost, rather than the imposition of terms on which other Churches may be united to the Anglican Communion. It seeks a unity which, so far from being a uniformity, deliberately conserves differing types of worship and polity under one faith and order. It is wide enough to embrace not only the reformed Churches in its purview, but the whole of Christendom.

It is important that this last point should be borne in mind in any estimate that Evangelicals may make of the implications of the Appeal, and the restrictions, ungracious as they may appear to them, with which some have interpreted it. Indeed, resolution 15 is directly intended to remind those whose natural tendency is to look in one direction only for reunion that " every branch of the Anglican Communion should prepare its

members for taking part in the universal fellowship of the reunited Church, by setting before them the loyalty which they owe to the universal Church, and the charity and understanding which are required of the members of so inclusive a Society." With that fuller loyalty in view, we have, as Liberal Evangelicals, no quarrel with those who endeavoured to bring our aspirations and our standpoint before the Roman representatives at Malines; and we have every sympathy with the far more hopeful approaches to the Eastern Churches, though in each case we felt that the statement of the Anglican position was left too much to representatives of our Church drawn chiefly from one school of thought.

It was, however, with a real sense of disappointment that we saw how the Appeal had been interpreted by the Anglicans at the joint conferences with Free Church leaders, held at Lambeth in the years immediately following its publication. Here at least there was real hope of progress, for in the realms of faith and doctrine it was felt that there was a close approximation, and that if the question of order could be settled, some actual scheme of reunion might result. And so it proved, for it was only upon this rock of episcopal ordination that the friendly negotiations broke down.

It is not that the Free Churchmen objected to episcopacy as being the norm of government for a reunited Church. In all schemes for union between reformed Churches it has been agreed that after union all ordinations shall be episcopal. But a period must elapse during which ministers who have not been episcopally ordained will be working side by side with

those ordained by bishops. What is to be their position in the united Church? It is during this period that the Catholic heritage is thought to be in peril, unless such ministers are prepared to submit to conditional reordination at the hands of bishops. It was upon this fresh ordination, or possibly a new commission with laying-on of hands by a bishop, that the Anglicans felt they must insist. To this the Free Church leaders cannot agree, for they claim that it would imply that something is lacking in the orders they possess; that their ministry is not really valid; that the Sacraments as administered by them are in some way deficient.

And the question we have to ask is whether the Lambeth Appeal of 1920 does or does not commit our Church to the position taken up by our representatives at these joint conferences.

Examine the Appeal afresh. The bishops confess their share in the guilt of crippling the Body of Christ by the broken fellowship, even though the causes of such division lie deep in the past. They speak of the non-episcopal Communions as "standing for rich elements of truth, liberty and life, which might otherwise have been obscured or neglected"; they "do not for a moment call in question the spiritual reality of the ministries which do not possess the Episcopate." They believe that "for all, the truly equitable approach to union is by the way of mutual deference to one another's consciences"; they declare that "the spiritual leadership of the Catholic Church in days to come depends upon the readiness with which each group is prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of a common fellowship"; they plead for "a readiness to an adventure of goodwill and still more of faith."

Should we not naturally conclude that all this would lead up to some sacrifice, some adventure of faith, some deference to another's conscience, involving a frank and full recognition of the ministry of those non-episcopal Communions in a united Church during the period which must elapse till all its ministers are episcopally ordained?

At least we claim that it is not the Appeal, with its accompanying resolutions and the comments on it in the encyclical letter itself, which even by implication and certainly not in actual words, would render such exceptional treatment impossible.[1]

If it be considered that the Catholic heritage of the Apostolical succession be imperilled by such interim relaxation of Catholic order, it might well be argued, as indeed the Archbishop of York has reminded us, that "we must take care that we do not so safeguard that heritage for ourselves as to miss the chance of imparting it to others. A scheme which in fact brings within the scope of the Apostolical succession, as we understand it, those ministries which are now without it, has obviously asserted the Catholic principle of the ministry with great effectiveness. It is, as I think, in that perspective that we must consider how far proposals for the difficult period of transition really compromise that principle." That is the utterance of one who, while claiming the Catholic heritage of Apostolical succession, is apparently prepared to suspend its operation in

[1] The resolution (12B) which states that the bishops "cannot approve of general schemes of intercommunion and exchange of pulpits," nor the celebration in Anglican Churches of the Holy Communion for members of the Anglican Church by ministers who have not been episcopally ordained," does not refer to such transition periods of which we have been speaking, but to present conditions before schemes of union are in actual being.

certain cases and for a specified period, in order to secure it in perpetuity.

But it is important to note that the Appeal itself makes no mention of the theory which regards Apostolical succession as necessary for the valid administration of the Sacraments. Indeed, the bishops speak of the "spiritual reality" of non-episcopal ministries, and acknowledge that they have been "manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as "effective means of grace." In the conference with the Free Churchmen this is repeated with emphasis; but it is nullified by the insistence with which it is claimed that "no one could be authorised to exercise his ministry amongst Anglican members of a reunited Church who had not been episcopally ordained."[1]

It is not without justification, as it would seem to us, that the Free Church rejoinder claims that this position is inconsistent and that something more should be conceded. "If the recognition so unmistakably given in words were translated into unmistakable actions, a great and difficult problem in reunion would be within sight of practical solution."

The Anglican statement which accompanied this rigid insistence on episcopacy states: "We regard the rule as much more than a mere rule of internal discipline. It embodies principles to which the Anglican Church has throughout its history adhered, and which contribute to the special position which it claims to hold in the Christian Church." But this is not strictly true, for in the seventeenth century after the Restoration there were many ministering in cures of the Church of England who had not received episcopal ordination,

[1] See Essay V (*b*).

and whom the bishops did not reordain.[1] If the Catholicity of our Church was not fatally compromised by such laxity in the seventeenth century, why should some similar, but admittedly temporary, relaxation of strict Catholic order jeopardise its catholicity in the twentieth century?

This is not the place to discuss in detail the question of the Christian ministry in relation to reunion. It may be noted here, however, that the fact that this has proved the greatest stumbling-block to schemes of reunion, has forced scholars to a fresh study of its origin. We believe that such study will go far to show that the so-called "Catholic" doctrine of Apostolical succession through the episcopate as an essential for the valid administration of the Sacraments is neither Catholic nor primitive, and cannot therefore be claimed as fundamental, or ultimately vital to the issue, amongst those Christian Communions which acknowledge the Scriptures and the practice of the Apostolic Church as authoritative.[2]

If it be maintained that the Anglican Church cannot lose sight of the relations in which we stand to other episcopal Churches in East and West; if we are responsible for seeing that nothing which we do now will create a new obstacle to the attainment of a wider unity than that with non-episcopal communions; if, further, this involves the strictest maintenance of the position that every minister in a united Church of which the Anglicans are a constituent part must be episcopally ordained—then reunion we believe will be postponed indefinitely, for such a condition is not likely to be

[1] Cf. Essay IX.
[2] Cf. Streeter, *The Primitive Church.*

accepted by any non-episcopal Church. But we refuse to believe that the fortunes of the Lambeth Appeal are finally and inevitably bound up with a proposal so unconvincing and unpromising. It is certainly not explicit in the Appeal, and we are convinced that it is not implicit either. Whether a way out of the apparent *impasse* may come along the line of the suggestions put forward as to some commission for service in the Greater Church "which shall be mutual, and unambiguously not an ordination," we cannot say. We would express the hope that in the spirit of the Appeal, and indeed in accordance with its letter, the Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference in 1930 may be bold to make some sacrifice, some real adventure of faith and goodwill, and "unite in a new and great endeavour to recover and manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which He prayed."

(*b*) A Free Church Presentation

By The Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, D.D., Professor of Church History in Westminster (Theological) College, Cambridge.

It is not without hesitation that I contribute an article to a volume issued in prospect of the approaching conference of Anglican bishops at Lambeth. That conference is the high council of a Communion to which I do not belong; and I feel that it is for members of that Communion, and not for others, to say what it should do. Moreover, the questions as regards union which it will have to face are in an exceptional degree critical for the Anglican Church; and an outsider who

discusses them, however friendly his spirit and excellent his intention, may easily make them more rather than less difficult. For such and similar reasons, my first impulse was to decline the kind invitation which the promoters of this volume sent me. On the other hand, union is not an Anglican preserve, but is a general and public Christian interest. And the Anglican authorities have not only asked the views of all the Churches on their proposals, but have sought the co-operation of especially the Free Churches of England in their examination. This co-operation was carried on in a series of meetings held at Lambeth between a number of English bishops (including both the archbishops) and representatives of the Evangelical Free Churches of England—meetings of which so eminent an authority as the ex-Archbishop of Canterbury (now Lord Davidson) said that "in their composition, their character and their purpose, they have no precedent in the history of the Church in these islands." In these circumstances, some statement from the Free Church point of view seems not only relevant, but even appropriate in these pages. I contribute it in certainly no spirit of controversy or party; and, while there is no use in writing at all if one does not write frankly, I shall try to keep in considerate remembrance the critical difficulties for Anglicanism to which I have referred.

I

The first remark to be made is that it is obvious and inevitable that the Lambeth Conference of 1930 must come to closer grips with definite and concrete schemes of union—especially as regards non-episcopal Churches

—than was necessary or even possible in the conference of 1920. The latter gathering issued, on the subject of union, an "Appeal to all Christian People." The effect of this has been felt throughout Christendom. It has given the idea of union a place in the thoughts and in the prayers and in the counsels of almost every Church in every land. It met everywhere with a friendly response; and a new spirit of inquiry into the subject and a new desire to understand others' positions manifested themselves in many quarters. Whatever the conference of 1930 may or may not do, no fair-minded man can refuse to the "Appeal" of 1920 a tribute of appreciation for the initiating impulse which it gave to the whole cause of Christian unity.

But this "Appeal" was—and was meant to be—only initiatory. It did not—and, of course, could not—present any worked-out scheme of reunion. Even its bases—the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Sacraments, and an "acknowledged ministry"—were little more than named, though it was added that "the episcopate is the one form of providing such a ministry." It was a proposal for discussion rather than a plan of union, and suggested a site rather than even sketched a structure.

That was ten years ago. Since then—in no small part owing to this initial impulse—things have developed. The union movement has passed from the stage of a general appeal to that of critical examination of basal principles and of practical schemes for actual incorporation. It is these developments which the coming Lambeth Conference must face, and it is on them that I shall say a few words here.

II

Take first the practical schemes which have been brought forward, or have been carried out, for actual incorporation. These are observable in various quarters in reformed Christendom. In some cases the movements have been independent of Anglicanism, and in some are in touch with it. The general character of these unions or proposals is plain. They all proceed on the line that *Churches nearest each other should unite.* Thus in Scotland the Presbyterians, and in England the Methodists have come, or are coming, together. In Canada the united Church includes Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians. And, on the same line, union is proposed in Southern India to include Episcopalians as well as non-Episcopal Communions. There are other instances, but these suffice for our present purpose.

It appears to me that it is of the first importance that the coming Lambeth Conference should appreciate this development and should enter into it. Of course, I know that many Anglicans have no interest in these family unions, and think only of the Eastern Churches and of Rome; but this is not the Lambeth Appeal, which was addressed to "all Christian people." So I say that Lambeth should cordially recognise these partial unions, which are the way in which union is actually being carried out. For the conference of 1930 to issue again a statement of a general character would be of little service. The union movement is now engaged in finding the steps on the way. And the steps are, as I have said, that Churches nearest each other are uniting. Some of these steps—as in Scotland

—may not immediately concern Anglicanism. But some—especially that in South India and elsewhere in the East—do immediately concern it. Therefore the coming Lambeth Conference must definitely say whether or not Anglicanism can keep in step with this development. If it can, then it may well retain the position in the union movement which it won by the "Appeal" of 1920. If it cannot and will not, then it may lose that position; and union will go on, step by step, without the participation of the Church which gave to it so much of its initial impulse. This would be indeed a regrettable result after so promising a beginning.

But there is another reason why the attitude taken to these steps to union—and particularly to that in Southern India—is of critical importance. Whatever ecclesiastical criticisms may be passed on these schemes, they are not less than demanded by the claims of the Kingdom of God in the regions concerned. They are inspired by religious necessity far more than by ecclesiastical interests. Here the dominions and the mission fields are voicing the demand for unity in a way which the home Churches imperfectly realise; and it will be a heavy responsibility indeed which will rest on the home Churches if their influence is used to veto movements which are not less than imperative if the heathen world is ever to be won for Christ. It is hardly possible to over-estimate the importance of this.

For the reason which I gave at the beginning of this essay—that an outsider may easily make the problem here more difficult for Anglicans than it is—I refrain from commenting in detail on the South India scheme, which unquestionably raises grave issues for Anglican-

ism, whatever way it is decided. But some decision whether or not Anglicanism will keep in step with this development of the union spirit is inevitable. I add one general remark. An invaluable rule in thinking is, I find, this—when in difficulties, enlarge your categories. This, which applies both to intellectual and to practical problems, is not inapplicable to the question before us. Considered along lines which are merely or mainly ecclesiastical—Episcopal, Presbyterian or any other—it may perhaps never find an accepted solution. But let it be raised—as all Church problems should eventually be raised—to be a religious issue, and it will take on a new orientation and may prove not insoluble. The word is true for Churches as well as individuals, and is true for the Lambeth Conference, even in discussing schemes of union, that they must seek *first* the Kingdom of God.

III

I pass now to the other development since 1920—the critical examination of bases of union. This examination has been carried on in various quarters, and, in one form or another, has been the subject of conference more or less official, with the unreformed as well as with the Evangelical Churches. I confine myself here, however, to the discussions *quorum minima pars fui*, and of which, therefore, I have some qualification to speak.

The conferences held at Lambeth during 1921–3 between certain bishops and certain officially appointed representatives of the Free Churches [1] were carried on not only in a spirit of unbroken friendliness—which

[1] The names will be found on p. 144 of Bell's *Documents on Christian Unity* (Oxford University Press).

surely among Christian men should go without saying—but also with entire frankness. I should like to add that we were all indebted to the admirable chairmanship of the then Archbishop of York, now Archbishop of Canterbury, who presided over the sub-committee which was occupied with the more detailed discussion.

The crucial issue proved to be, as was to be expected, the ministry. But surely it should not fail to be noted that it was not till this was reached that really vital divergency arose. There was complete agreement on the fundamental verities of faith. We should make far more of this than we do. We state it, or assume it, and pass on to forget it as we debate and differ over what comes next. But it is neither reason nor religion to make divergencies about polity outweigh or even equate agreements on the Catholic Faith. Let us be Christians first, and then Episcopalians or whatever else after. For myself, I am a Presbyterian, and a Presbyterian can be stiff enough at times. But I should count it unworthy of Christianity and even of—in the true sense—Catholicity, to let a difference about the Presbyterian or any other form of polity take more than a subordinate place as compared with a one-ness in the faith and in Christ Himself. Proportion is as essential to truth as it is to architecture. It is to be feared, however, that no type of mind gets things out of proportion more often than does the ecclesiastical.

But it should be added that in these conferences a considerable advance toward agreement was also made on the question even of polity. It was accepted that, for reasons of history, an essential place should be given to episcopacy; but, "similarly"—it is, I hope, no serious breach of the privacy of the meetings to say

that the reiteration of this word by some of us whenever episcopacy was mentioned became a standing pleasantry in the proceedings—the historic place of presbytery and of the Christian congregation is accepted. Here—for, I think, the first time in a document of this character—these three elements in Church order are brought together, not to oppose, but to complement one another; and we may apply to them the lines, in one of Shakespeare's sonnets, about "fair, kind and true," that they

> "have often lived alone,
> Which three till now never kept seat in one,"

—though which of the adjectives applies to which type of polity I shall not venture to decide. Surely this is the right way of it. If there is one thing which I learned from some experience of union negotiations in Scotland, it is that these should be carried on, less with the idea that each side must *concede* something (though, at times, this too is called for), than with the idea that each must *contribute* something. It is that principle which governs this part of the joint conferences findings. These findings, however, are, as regards polity, merely general, and the relations between the three constituent elements are not worked out. The blessed word "similarly" has still to be spelt. But there is consent as to the comprehensive character of the polity of the future.

This substantial agreement as to the faith and this general indication as to polity are valuable. The further question of the ministry, and particularly of the recognition of non-episcopal ministries, proved more crucial. This calls for somewhat explicit exposition.

IV

The original Lambeth "Appeal," in making its claim for episcopacy as the means of providing a universally acknowledged ministry, added these words:

> "It is not that we call in question for a moment the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communions which do not possess the Episcopate; on the contrary, we thankfully acknowledge that these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace."

This was felt to be somewhat undefined, especially in regard to what may be called the churchly character of non-episcopal ministries. Many good agencies have "spiritual reality" and are "blessed and owned" even as "means of grace." The Free Church representatives naturally asked for a more explicit statement, and they formulated what they would "desire to know" thus:—

> "Whether Anglicanism is prepared to recognise non-episcopal communions (or any of them) as corporate parts of the Church of Christ, and their ministers as ministers of Christ's Word and Sacraments."

To this very definite question, the Anglican representatives gave eventually a very frank reply, the crucial sentence of which is the following most notable declaration:—

> "It seems to us in accordance with the Lambeth Appeal to say, as we are prepared to say, that the

> ministries we have in view in this memorandum—ministries which imply a sincere intention to preach Christ's Word and administer the Sacraments as Christ has ordained, and to which authority so to do has been solemnly given by the churches concerned—are *real ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church.*" (The italics are, of course, mine.)

I venture to call this the most significant declaration which the Church of England has made to English nonconformity since the time when Archbishop Bancroft maintained, as his predecessors had not done, an exclusive doctrine of episcopal ordination. It says two things quite definitely about non-episcopal ministries. One is that they are not only evangelical, but also *sacramental;* the other that they are *intra ecclesiam.* This declaration, if acted upon, would be not less than epoch-making for union. As attempts are periodically made in some quarters to ignore it or belittle it, I feel it is necessary to say that it was made after the fullest deliberation, and with knowledge of the importance which would be attached to it; and that it was presented personally by the present Archbishop of Canterbury and endorsed by all the members of the episcopal bench who were members of the joint conference.[1] I cannot believe that the Lambeth Conference of 1930 will disown a declaration so authoritatively issued.

I have just said that this, *if acted upon,* would be epoch-making for union. But something was added to it—or, one might more fitly say, subtracted from it—which meant that what had thus been admitted in most

[1] For names, see Bell's *Documents on Christian Unity,* p. 156.

satisfactory language was to have no practical effect as regards the attitude of Anglicans to Free Church ministries. It was intimated that those in these ministries—"real ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church"—must still be episcopally re-ordained before Anglicanism could regard them as "authorised." The preface to the Ordinal of the Prayer Book requires this; which, moreover, was said to be a principle "to which the Anglican Church throughout its history has adhered" —a statement not quite accurate historically. Later, it was intimated that this re-ordination might be given in the form known as *sub conditione*—a modification which made no impression.

With this the joint conference—with entire mutual friendliness, but with general consent—was brought to an end. It is here that the coming meeting at Lambeth must take up the matter.

I refrain—again for the reason mentioned earlier—from dealing with this proposal in any detailed argument. The Free Church view of it is to be found in the volume entitled *Documents on Christian Unity*,[1] and may be summed up in the three words that it is impracticable, illogical and inappropriate. The Bishop of Gloucester (Dr. Headlam), whose mind always deals with actualities, at once dissociated himself from re-ordination, as impracticable, remarking that it has been proposed before, and had to be abandoned, and has "never been accepted." It is illogical—as *The Times* recognised in a leading article—for to ordain to the ministry of Word and Sacrament a man of whom

[1] Pp. 165–7. I venture to ask that this be read by any interested.

you have just said that he is in that very ministry, is unreason itself, and the ceremony could have no solemn reality. And it is inappropriate, because ordination is one thing and is universal, while authorisation is another and is particular (or "denominational"); and to confuse these acts and spheres is, I must take leave to say, inaccurate thinking. I trust that in these last sentences I have not broken the promise I made at the outset of this essay not to write controversially. It is not from the spirit of controversy that I write them. It is because, if this essay is to be of any use, it must state quite explicitly where—in the Free Church view—the *impasse* to union lies. It does not lie in episcopacy. It lies in an episcopacy which—especially after declaring that non-episcopal ministries are "real ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church"—*insists on re-ordaining*. That is the *impasse* which the coming Lambeth Conference must face. It is impossible to think that what we have here had presented to us is the last word which the wisdom and charity of that conference will say to non-episcopal Christendom. I add that the issue is really more critical for Anglicanism than for the Free Churches. Anglicanism is sometimes called, as regards union, a "bridge-Church." I should congratulate it if it earns and retains the right to such a title. But one must make this observation—that a bridge, to be of use, must be open at both ends.

V

Here I think I should leave off—not so much because my allotted space is nearly exhausted, as because I feel

that too much argument or even comment is inadvisable. The two points which I have ventured to press as matters which the coming conference must face are, first, its taking its place in the "step-by-step" union movements, and secondly, its acting appropriately and adequately on the declaration that Free Church ministries are "real ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church." I shall not say more on these points.

But there are two other points on each of which I wish to say a word before closing.

One is that a union movement cannot live on conferences and declarations alone, but the words of union must be accompanied by acts of union. The acts of union I mean are, or include, occasional interchange of pulpits and occasional intercommunion—the former not to talk about union, but to preach Christ, who is our common Lord, and the latter not as "hospitality," but because the Lord's Table is not our own, but His. I know, of course, the somewhat cheap objection that we must not take "short cuts"; and I know that many Anglicans at once raise a protest against the very suggestion of these practical advances. But everyone who has had experience of successful union negotiations —as the branch of the Church to which I belong can claim to have had—knows how not less than essential such acts are. Would the great union recently consummated in Scotland have had the glimmer of the ghost of success if the pulpits and communion tables in the one Church were barred against the ministers and members of the other? I wish nothing done which is unconsidered and unwise; but I do respectfully say that the liberal and evangelical section of Anglicanism

should not let this essential aspect of a union movement be ignored and inoperative.

The other thing I wish to mention is this. It will be said that what has been urged in this paper may be true enough from the point of view of the Free Churches; but the Lambeth Appeal is œcumenical in its sweep, and the coming conference must not do anything in the Free Church direction which would hinder future relations with the East or even with Rome. What I have to say about this argument—by which we were more than once held up in our *pourparlers* with the bishops—is that it has its significance, but it cannot be carried far without reducing the whole Anglican movement for unity to futility. Just as the Anglican claim of "comprehensiveness"—inclusive of "catholic," "evangelical" and "liberal"—has real value, but if carried beyond a certain length simply means that Anglicanism ceases to be an *ecclesia docens;* so is it true that an appeal for reunion addressed at once to reformed and to unreformed Christendom has its interest, but again, if carried beyond a certain point, means that nothing can actually be done in either direction. The Lambeth vision would thus end in a grandiose impotence. It comes to this. Minor matters may be adjusted on the lines of balance and compromise; but, on the great issues of union, Lambeth must not let one ecclesiastical tradition cancel another, but must have its own mind as to what is true—true in the light of, first, the facts of the working of the Spirit of God, Whose Mind is known by what He does, and, secondly, the best evidence of unbiased scholarship. It is by this double standard that the approaching conference will stand or fall in history.

I ask to be allowed to say, as a last word, that many prayers will be offered beyond the bounds of the Anglican parish, and not least by Free Churchmen, that the Head of the Church—Who, as a Latin father finely said, " called Himself not tradition, but Truth " —will guide the deliberations and decisions of this great council, upon which so much depends, not only for the peace of its own fellowship, but also for the unity of Christ's Church and for the advance of His Kingdom throughout the world.

VI

THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNITY OVERSEAS—CHINA

By Professor Francis Cho-Min Wei, M.A., Ph.D., D.C.L.,
Acting President Central China University, Wuchang.

SINCE the landing of Robert Morrison in China in 1807, one hundred and twenty missionary societies have been at work in this land. They vary much in their financial strength and in their scope of activities. But the motive that has prompted their adventure is undoubtedly the same. China is a land with a vast population. Most of the people are outside the fold of Christian influence. The field is indeed wide, and labourers are few. The call is heard and missionary societies respond to it. They do what is the privilege of every Christian—that is, to make disciples of all nations and baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to teach them to obey all the commands the Lord has laid on His followers.

There is much in the achievements of these hundred and twenty missionary societies for which we Chinese Christians ought to feel grateful. The self-sacrificing and devoted labour of four generations of missionaries has planted the Church of Christ in our midst. In this work they have been through many a crisis and have borne patiently much hardship. They have met with misunderstanding, abuses unspeakable, nay, even

persecution and martyrdom. The Christian Church in China has been built on the lives of those who served their Master faithfully and well. We are, of course, not blind to their mistakes. They must have made mistakes, for to err is human. But mistakes made in the service of the Lord ought to be judged in the spirit of Christian charity.

A well-thought-out, comprehensive plan for the evangelisation of China is, in the nature of the thing, not to be expected from the beginning. Missionary societies were at first overwhelmed by the amount of work to be done and the opportunities of doing it. Each would go into the field with a zeal that would count no cost. They went ahead with their own plans regardless of what other people were doing or were going to do. As late as the year 1913, after more than a century of Protestant missions in China, the question asked in several large sections of the country, whether the Christian forces in each area had a clear and definite plan for its missionary occupation, met everywhere with a negative answer. The evangelisation of China by an organised Christian movement for the whole country was yet to be effected. If the great work is to be done, the Christian forces must be organised.

The history of the organisation of the whole Christian movement in China may be traced as far back as the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. To follow up the work of this great conference a China Continuation Committee was instituted. It was the function of this committee to collect information and make it available for all the missions at work in China, with the view of helping them to see the advis-

ability of correlation and co-operation. One of the first achievements of the committee was the adoption by the missions of the principle of comity. By this principle it was agreed by the missions, among other things, not to enter any unoccupied field in any given area without proper consultation with the inter-denominational or inter-mission body for that sphere; and not to initiate institutional work, such as educational, medical and industrial work, in areas in which different Churches or missions were working in close proximity, without taking the necessary precautions to avoid overlapping and conflict. In this way the Churches and missions were brought into closer relationship with one another in facing the great joint task of making Christ known to the Chinese millions. It was a great step forward towards the prevention of duplication and the removal of friction and misunderstanding.

The principle of comity was adopted in the year 1913. For some years previous to this, union work had been attempted in the great centres with a certain measure of success. In fact united effort may be said to have been the ideal of the Centenary Conference of 1907. But union work in those early years was confined largely to the higher branches of education. The *China Mission Year-book* of 1917 has on record sixty union institutions. In several of these as many as seven missionary societies were united in the teaching of theology, in general education and in medical education.

This kind of co-operative enterprise is, of course, not ecclesiastical unity, but it may do much to hasten the time when ecclesiastical unity becomes possible. In the

meantime, denominational amalgamation is making headway. The four Anglican missions in China—namely, the Church Missionary Society, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel from England; the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, and the American Church Mission—have succeeded in getting their General Synod organised, in which the eleven missionary districts of the four missions join to form the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, *i.e.* the Chinese Holy Catholic Church. The Lutherans also effected a union of a large proportion of their societies in China so as to work rapidly towards a union of all the Lutheran bodies in the country. Similarly, the Presbyterians have organised themselves on a national basis which gives them a General Assembly.

Much enthusiasm was shown for some years after 1907 in support of provincial federal councils. Such councils were organised in seven provinces, and those in Chekiang, Kiangsu, Kwangtung and Szechuan still survive. All the provincial federal councils, as well as the denominational unions, are international, and the former are at the same time inter-denominational.

The National Christian Conference of 1922 and the National Christian Council resulting from it have given added impetus to the union movement. The highest pitch of the movement so far was reached in 1927, when the First General Assembly of the Church of Christ in China was held, and thereby nineteen denominational groups joined to form a United Church. The following are extracts from an article on the subject "What is the Church of Christ in China?" by the Rev. A. R. Kepler, published in *The Chinese Recorder*, January 1927 :—

"The Doctrinal Basis of Union does not contain all that every Christian or body of believers should believe. It seeks to express only that modicum of doctrine which all must hold in common if the religion of Jesus is to be conserved. . . . Another reason why the United Church presents no detailed creed is the fact that, if such a creed is adopted, it should be the product of the Chinese Church, expressive of her doctrinal convictions. A creed prepared at the present time would unduly bear the stamp of the Churches of the West. The Doctrinal Statement is, therefore, brief but comprehensive. It is as follows:—

"'The Church of Christ in China, being autonomous, will have the prerogative of formulating its own doctrinal statements, but these will, we believe, in the providence of God, and under the teaching of His Spirit, be in essential harmony with the beliefs of the Christian Church in other lands. As such a declaration of beliefs has not yet been formulated, the United Church formulated this credal statement of fundamentals.'

"Our bond of union consists:

"'In our faith in Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and Lord, on Whom the Christian Church is founded; and in an earnest desire for the establishment of His Kingdom throughout the whole earth.

"'In our acceptance of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the divinely inspired Word of God and the supreme authority in matters of faith and duty.

"'In our acknowledgment of the Apostles' Creed as expressing the fundamental doctrines of our common evangelical faith.'"

As to the question of polity, Mr. Kepler writes:—

"The plan of Church government proposed gives

autonomy to the local Church, with a gradation of Church councils which have names or alternate names to which the large majority have been accustomed. The powers of all the Church councils above the local Church are pastoral, not autocratic. The principles underlying the organisation are democratic and not hierarchical. . . .

"The Constitution of the United Church provides for no stereotyped, rigid form of Church government. But it permits that elasticity of expression in organisation which will permit 'daring experimentations' in seeking to discover that form of Church government which will most adequately lend itself to Chinese customs, life and thought.

"There are four grades of Church councils, namely, the local Church, the district association, the divisional council, the general assembly."

The establishment of the Church of Christ in China is certainly one of the most encouraging achievements of the union movement in the country. It has brought together at least one quarter of the Protestant Christian community, which is no insignificant success. But there is yet a great deal to be done before the aim of our union efforts is finally reached. Our next step is, of course, the removal of all the obstacles that stand in the way of the union of all the Protestant Churches in China. The ultimate goal, however, is not obtained until all who call themselves Christians are united. Is there any such possibility?

Much has been said and written about the Church consciousness of the Chinese Christians. A good deal of this is certainly speculative in character. Consciousness is not a thing that lends itself easily to measurement, and no census of the opinions of the Chinese

Christians has ever been taken. On the other hand, it is felt by some observers of the Christian movement in China that recently Chinese Christians seem to have lost some of their first enthusiasm for Christian unity. It is not fair to interpret this as a real loss of interest. Events of the last three years may have absorbed too much of the attention of Chinese Christians to permit a due share of it to be devoted to questions which are not of immediate urgency. For a time during this period, the pressing question in many parts of China was the existence of the Church in China. Church unity, important as it is, had to be relegated to a secondary place in the minds of most people. Furthermore, the lack of encouragement from some of the mission boards in the West does much to damp the enthusiasm of the Chinese. They are not unaware of the value of the international relationships now in existence between their Churches in China and those in other lands. They feel, therefore, truly baffled in face of the apparent dilemma that they must choose between a national Church without international relationships, and membership in an international Church by sacrificing their aspirations for a national Church. Moreover, the fact that many of the Christian enterprises in China at present still depend on the financial support of the older Churches abroad makes Chinese Christians hesitate openly to denounce the abnormality caused by denominational prejudices inculcated from without. Has the union movement halted? it has been asked. Our answer is, No; it is waiting for its chance. Let us look into the situation of the Church in China to-day.

The field for evangelical work is too large for any one

Church or mission. No one who knows China has ever doubted this. The consequence is a multiplicity of missions at work at the same time. Internally, there is still much duplication, in spite of the principle of comity already mentioned. Duplication of organisation and machinery is inevitable under the circumstances. Owing to certain difficulties, a comprehensive plan for the evangelisation of the whole country is still felt to be impracticable. Denominational and theological barriers have not been entirely broken down. Pride and prejudice are still to be overcome and finally removed. Externally, our non-Christian brethren find it almost impossible to understand us. Do we not profess to follow one Master and to worship one God? Do we not constantly say to ourselves and to others that despite our denominational differences we are one in Christ, that there is one Faith, one Baptism, and one Church? But in appearance and in fact we are divided, and somehow we are unable to get together and realise our oneness. To begin with, there is the impassable gap between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The difference between the two groups is so great as to require different names in Chinese for their religion which is supposed to be fundamentally the same. The Catholic religion is called *tien-chu-chiao*, meaning the religion of God, and the Protestants are called *ja-su-chiao*, meaning the religion of Jesus. Under these circumstances it is futile to try to tell the Chinese that we are of the same Faith, and that our differences are only accidental, and not basic.

Among the Protestant groups, too, the variety is puzzling to one who is not accustomed to it. We may

be reminded that there are sects among the Buddhists, in China as well as in other lands. But it ought to be borne in mind that Buddhist sects, at least as the Chinese understand them, are nothing but schools of theological thinking. We may come across conflicts between them in Buddhist history, due largely to personal jealousy and political complications; and in Japan even religious wars, which, however, are unknown to Chinese history. Yet, under normal circumstances, adherents of the different sects are not divided in their spiritual fellowship. Such division would not be sanctioned by the best thinkers among them, and certainly not by those in authority even within the sectarian organisations, as, for instance, the sectarian temples. Hsuen Tsang, the learned Chinese Buddhist pilgrim of the seventh century who spent not less than seventeen years in India and was acquainted with five Indian languages, brought back the report that Indian Buddhists of different sects lived in the same monasteries, sat at the feet of the same teachers, and worshipped under the same roof. When Lama Peh visited Wuhan several years ago, he was most cordially received, Lamaist as he was, by the Chinese Buddhists, as one of their own number. Chinese adherents of the Ch'an sect did not treat a co-religionist of another sect as a stranger. Sects do not divide the Buddhists in their spiritual fellowship to-day in China, any more than they did in India thirteen hundred years ago. It is therefore a poor analogy to compare Christian denominations with Buddhist sects.

Denominationalism not only confuses the non-Christians with regard to the nature and spirit of our religion, but it has also created an impossible situation

for the Chinese Christians themselves. For reasons already made clear, missions have concentrated their work in certain sections of the country. In other sections these missions may not have started work at all, or have stations or churches in widely separated districts. All this is in accordance with the principle of comity, and is really necessitated by circumstances in China. In days when the Chinese travelled but little, problems arising from such a situation were few and easy to settle. But nowadays, with better means of communication, the mobility of the Chinese population is becoming greater every day. Chinese Christians move from one place to another. In order to keep in touch with a Christian community, should a Chinese be required to change his Church allegiance every time he changes his residence? This would be necessary as long as the denominations in China refuse to recognise each other's Church membership, and as long as some of the denominational Churches continue to inculcate into the minds of their members that the Sacraments performed in their own churches are more efficacious than those performed in a different way, but with the same significance, in other Christian churches.

Indeed, there are still people in this day and age who ought to know better, but who still refuse to call denominations other than their own " Churches," and insist on the use of the disparaging term " Christian bodies." These same people are, of course, not unaware of the fact that their own Church is elsewhere similarly refused the honour of being called " Church." The writer is an Anglican, or rather a member of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui. A little over two years ago he had occasion to go to South China from the Yangtze

Valley to take up temporary residence there with his family. It happened that there was only one Protestant church in that district within a radius of forty-five miles from his place, and unfortunately that church was not of his denomination. In spite of this, he desired to have the privilege for himself and his family of sharing with this Church its fellowship and its spiritual benefits, including participation in the Holy Communion. He went to call on the minister in charge, who was an American and presumably understood well the purpose of his visit. He was cordially received, but given to understand that, while he and his family would be welcome at the Sunday morning prayers, they were not supposed to come to the Communion service. This was a clear case that a communicant of the Anglican Church was not accepted as a communicant by another Protestant Church.

But we ought to remember how often our own clergymen have treated communicants from other Churches in the same way. The writer was in Berlin not very long ago. He was boarding in the Missionary Training Seminary of the Berlin Mission, where he was not only given every kind of hospitality, but was received by everybody on the staff of the Mission House, as well as by every one in the Prussian United Church, as one of their own number, although he was known to be but a poor Anglican! One Sunday morning he was going to the Communion service in a church of the Church of England not far from the University of Berlin. The two young German friends from the Missionary Training Seminary who accompanied him expressed their desire of joining with him in the Holy Communion just for that one occasion, for the sake of Christian fellowship.

"After all we are one," they said, "one in Christ." Coming to the door of the church, the writer introduced himself to the clergyman in charge as an Anglican communicant of good standing, properly armed with testimonials from his clergyman and his bishop in China. He was well received, but when he asked whether the two Lutherans who were with him could participate in the Communion just for that one time, the clergyman in his strong English accent, "No; if you loved your said own Church you would not allow it." I was dumbfounded with this reply. I went through the service, but did not make my communion, for I was not in the proper spirit to do it that morning. "If you loved your own Church you would not allow it!" That kept ringing in my ears for a long time afterwards. Such is denominationalism among Christians! Such is denominational pride!

Is it right to perpetuate such denominational prejudices in China, while most of the denominational differences signify very little to the Chinese Christians? With the exception of a few—fortunately very few—who have had Church history taught to them from the sectarian point of view, the Chinese Christians know little about what the western denominations stand for, and still less why they should stay in water-tight compartments. Among the lay people there are some who have had a certain amount of denominational pride inculcated into their minds. It is human weakness to take pleasure in feeling somewhat better than others. But it is not Christian to think that we are better Christians simply because we interpret history differently from others.

Let it be made clear that we are not making any

statement with regard to the denominational differences or peculiarities in general. We are making no plea to abolish all denominational differences. We deplore those differences which divide the Christians in spiritual fellowship and make some of them feel themselves better qualified for membership in the Church universal than others. Other differences which only go to make variety, and do not keep us away from one another spiritually, may well continue and have their proper place in the life of the Chinese Church. We do not feel prepared to endorse the statement sometimes made that, as soon as the Chinese Church becomes independent financially, the Chinese Christians will throw all the denominational differences overboard. They will in all probability discard some and retain others. If human nature works in the same way in China as in other parts of the world there will be differences among the Chinese Christians similar to those which have caused denominational division of the Church in the West. But, on the other hand, if history teaches anything, we feel confident that these differences, be they large or small, will not be allowed to keep different sections of the Chinese Christian community in water-tight compartments, so much so that they would almost regard one another as adherents of different faiths. The non-Christian environment, the common task of having to evangelise a vast population, and the anti-Christian attacks and perhaps persecutions that may arise from time to time, will draw the Chinese Christians together and help to create and foster the consciousness that they are all one.

Uniformity is not to be expected, nor is it to be desired. Uniformity is deadening. The question of

the organic unity of all the Christian Churches in China is still premature. Certain preliminaries have to come first. Let us bear it in mind that Church unity means the union of all those who call themselves followers of Christ and believe that Church organisation is the means to extend the Kingdom of God on earth.

All the major questions concerning the united Church in China ought to be decided by the Chinese Christians when they are able to make their really representative opinions on Church affairs articulate. Without speculating too much in the meantime, we would venture the suggestion that to try to found the Chinese United Church on such doctrines as the Apostolical succession is simply to court failure. As far as we can gauge from the signs of the time, it is not likely that episcopacy will be the form of ecclesiastical polity for the Chinese Church of the future. True, the union of the Christian Church in South India is being effected on an episcopal basis. But what is possible in South India suggests no probability in China. We do not have in our midst, as they have in South India, such a decisive element as the old Syrian Church, with the prestige of continuous existence from the fourth century. In any union scheme the Churches in South India must take the Syrian Church into consideration, and the Syrian Church is episcopal. Another decisive factor there is the strong European and Anglo-Indian Christian community, with a considerable episcopal percentage. The European and American community in the Church in China is almost a negligible element in the question of unity. Our friends from abroad are mere sojourners, without any intention of permanent residence among us. Further, the large proportion of rural Christians in

India forms a conspicuous contrast with the considerable urban Christian community in China. While, according to those who are in a position to judge concerning Church affairs in India, polity on a democratic basis is out of the question there, hierarchy is distasteful to the Chinese, who have imbibed all sorts of democratic ideas during recent years.

Let us turn our attention to some practical problems, solution of which demands immediate consideration. First, we would press the question of recognising one another's membership by the different Churches. As far as the Protestant Churches in China are concerned, there is little difficulty in this connection except in the case of one or two denominations. But we ought to extend the recognition to full membership. Any Christian who is a communicant of good standing in his own Church ought to be received and treated as a communicant by all other Churches. He ought to be accorded all the privileges except those in connection with the management of the Church to which he owes no allegiance in the first instance. For instance, he should be given such privileges as participation in the Holy Communion, but at the election of the vestry or of delegates to Church legislative bodies he should not have a vote.

Next, we consider it necessary to recognise the ministry of the other Churches, whether it is episcopal or not. We should have exchange of pulpits, and we ought not to discourage our own members from taking part in the religious activities of the other Churches, including the Communion service. Recognition of the ministry of another Church, however, does not imply to our mind that a minister of one church

should be invited to celebrate the Holy Communion in another church of a different denomination. Each Church has its own regulations and traditions. Its religious services are supposed to have definite places in its corporate life. In other words, every service is part and parcel of a certain religious system. To expect a minister trained in one system to take an active part in another is impossible. But the various systems are simply different ways of helping people to receive the grace of God. So long as we do not assume the absurd position that God's grace can come to us more, or more effectively through our own ministry than through the ministry of the other Churches, we should do nothing to discourage our members from taking advantage of whatever spiritual benefits may be offered to them by the other Churches.

In this way, as a preliminary step, we hope the different denominations will be drawn more closely together and the barrier now dividing them gradually removed. We need to understand each other and to learn to realise that we are spiritually one. All differences are for human convenience, and count for nothing in the presence of our Father in Heaven. Only pride and prejudice are keeping us apart. More frequent intercourse and more mingling, greater humility all round and more earnest prayer, will create more and more the consciousness of our oneness, and will bring about in course of time the solidarity of the Christian Church, so essential to our corporate witness in a non-Christian land such as China, as well as to the richest possible fruitage of our spiritual life.

VII

THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNITY OVERSEAS—PERSIA

By The Rt. Rev. J. H. Linton, D.D., Bishop in Persia.

(N.B.—This essay aims at being in the main little more than a historical account of the growing inter-mission and inter-Church co-operation in Persia, leading latterly to active steps being taken towards having one united national Church of Persia. The proposals for the South India United Church are being studied in Persia and will probably be taken as a model for framing the constitution of a united Persian Church.)

I. *Ancient Christian Churches in Persia*

THE Christian Church in Persia has an episcopal ancestry. In Dr. Eugene Stock's *History of the Church Missionary Society* he refers to the fact that at the Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325, one of the bishops present was Johannes, Metropolitan of Persia and the Great India. Two hundred years later Cosmas wrote that "among the Bactrians . . . and Persians . . . there is an infinite number of Churches with bishops and a vast multitude of Christian people."

When Islam was conquering Western Asia, Nestorian Christianity was spreading from Persia to China and Tartary, and in the tenth and eleventh centuries Christian bishops were presiding over dioceses in

Central Asia where now Islam holds sway. And if it is true that the last remaining vestige of Nestorian missionary work has shrunk down to a tablet with an inscription telling of what the Church has done in the past, it must also be remembered how that Church went through the fire of persecution. To-day a remnant is to be found in the north-west of Persia, and it has still preserved its episcopal order.

The Armenian national Church, with its head-quarters at Etchmiadzin, has a bishop resident in Tabriz whose diocese extends over the west of Persia and beyond, and also a bishop resident in Julfa, Isfahan, whose diocese stretches right out to the Pacific Ocean in the east. When the Churches of the West began missionary work in Persia, it was the presence of these ancient Churches in the land which made it possible for Christian missionaries to reside in this Moslem country. But in no sense can it be said that either of these ancient Churches is a national Persian Church. They are foreign Churches in the land.

II. *Modern Christian Missions in Persia*

The American Presbyterian Board sent two missionaries from Turkey in 1829 to explore north-west Persia with a view to opening missionary work in that area. Among the Moslems those pioneers had a truly appalling reception. They were housed in a stable with a fire of burning cowdung, which with the stench of cattle and the lowing of calves made life unbearable. This was done that the Moslems should not suffer defilement from contact with Christians. In marked contrast was their reception among the Nestorians, for bishops

and people vied with one another in showing their visitors "the kindness of God." It was very natural, therefore, that the deputation advised the Board to establish a mission among the Nestorian Christians. But from the inception of the work the ultimate aim was the evangelisation of the Moslems. The mission was begun in 1833, and declared that it had no desire to deprive the existing members of the Church of any of their religious privileges nor to subject them to foreign ecclesiastical power, but, by the grace of God, to enable the Nestorian Church to exert a commanding influence in the spiritual regeneration of Persia. Influential Nestorian ecclesiastics urged the Presbyterian missionaries to preach in their churches, which they did, often with the bishop present standing beside the preacher. There followed a great evangelical revival in the Nestorian Church. The missionaries hoped it would lead to the vitalising of the Church without interfering with its organisation. But at length a separation came, and the "evangelical" element broke off and formed its own synod, with five presbyteries, of which three were in Persia and two in Turkey. In 1876 the "Evangelical Church of Teheran" was organised, with twelve members, of whom eleven were Armenians and one was a convert from Islam. Stations were also opened in Tabriz (1873), and later on in Hamadan, Resht, Kermanshah and Meshed.

In 1868 the Nestorian Church made a formal appeal to the then Archbishop of Canterbury to send them missionaries. This led to the founding of a mission under the direction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose object was "not to make proselytes to the

English Church, but to aid them to reform their own Church, where needful, upon a primitive basis and after primitive models." That work is for the time being (if not permanently) closed.

Meanwhile, in 1869 a missionary of the Church Missionary Society from India, the Rev. Robert Bruce, visited Persia, and took up his residence in Julfa. A severe famine devastated the country about that time, and Bruce felt that it was his Christian duty to stay and help to establish famine relief for the suffering people. In 1875 the C.M.S. adopted the Persia mission, with its centre at Julfa. Kerman, Yezd and Shiraz were later occupied, and in recent years the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society has opened work at Duzdab on the Baluchistan frontier.

As in the north, so also in Isfahan, missionary work was begun in the first instance among Eastern Christians, in this case the Armenians; but with the definite purpose of helping that Church towards a deeper spiritual life, and with the hope that it would prove to be a power for the evangelisation of the Moslems. There were at this time about 5000 Armenians in Julfa. They had suffered much persecution, and in circumstances of great difficulty the Armenian Church had kept its candle alight and preserved its witness in this Moslem land. Bruce and his colleagues gave their attention to working for the spiritual and intellectual uplift of this ancient Church. Moreover, such was the fanaticism of the Moslems, that Christians were not allowed to reside in the Moslem city of Isfahan, but in the Armenian suburb of Julfa.

Thus the justification for the policy adopted in both missions, of beginning work in the first instance among

the members of the ancient Churches, lies in the fact that it was impossible to do direct work among Moslems, and it was hoped that by a revival of spiritual life in these Eastern Churches they would themselves become missionaries to the Moslems.

III. *Growing Desire for Outward and Visible Unity*

For many years the usual route by which C.M.S. missionaries entered central Persia was through Russia and Teheran. This brought C.M.S. missionaries into frequent contact with their American brethren. Our bishops and clergy preached in their churches and we all enjoyed fellowship with them in spiritual things. At times some of the American missionaries came as far south as Isfahan and conducted special services in our churches.

In 1912 an inter-mission conference was held in Hamadan, and steps were taken towards closer co-operation in our work. For example, suggestions were brought forward with a view to standardising the requirements for the baptism of converts from Islam. It soon became increasingly evident that, so far as the missionaries of both Churches were concerned, there was close unity in aim and teaching, and already we were using very much the same literature (scanty as it was) in our work among Moslems. Distance and the difficulty and danger of travel made more frequent conferences a practical impossibility. But when Christians moved about from place to place in Persia they used to take with them a letter of introduction, which admitted them to the privileges of the Church in the town to which they had gone. Intercommunion of this kind has been practised in Persia for many years.

In 1925 an inter-Church conference was held at Hamadan. Our Church was represented by two Persian deacons, converts from Islam. At this conference a new sense of the unity of the Church throughout Persia was felt by all, and specially by the Persian Christians present. One of the important subjects before the conference was "inter-Church organisation." The conference resolved: "That in our opinion the time for inter-Church organisation has arrived," and a commission was appointed "to draw up rules of union" for the Persian- and Turkish-speaking Churches. [In north-west Persia Turkish is largely spoken.]

"To draw up rules of union" was a big advance in action on what was contemplated when the conference was planned, and is an indication of how the idea gripped the Persian Christians present. Then follows a finding on the composition of the commission which is instructive and one which we foreigners do well to note. It says:

> "The above commission shall consist of ten Persian Christians, one Englishman, one American, one Assyrian, and one Armenian. But the privilege of voting shall be restricted to the ten converts from other faiths, the others having merely the right of advice and consultation."

The writer was appointed chairman of this commission, and was also given the power of appointing the secretary. I confess I was somewhat nonplussed at the speed at which things had gone forward, and so were some of the American missionaries. We had not expected such progress in the desire of the Persian Christians towards a united Persian Church. Further,

notice has to be taken of the fact that at this stage (1925) the Persian Christians wanted to be sure that the rules for their united Persian Church should not be imposed on them either by westerners or by members of the old Eastern Churches such as Assyrians or Armenians. The voting members were to be all Persians. The chief difficulties in the way were felt to be racial rather than ecclesiastical. But as far as Persian Christians were concerned, it was evident that from that time onward their hearts were set on having one united national Persian Church.

Up to about this time, as has already been indicated, owing to the costliness and unsafe conditions of travel, and the great distance between the churches, Persian Christians in north and south scarcely ever met one another. Now, when they did meet and discovered that they were being organised on two different principles, both claiming scriptural and ancient authority, they began to question as to the reasons therefor. They could see that as far as missionaries of north and south were concerned there was nothing but loving fellowship in spirit and aim to be observed. Could the missionaries therefore not settle their differences, and so enable the Persian Church to be united in visible organisation, as it was so clearly one in spirit and teaching and evangelising zeal? For us missionaries this was humbling, but wholesome. It affects us in a way that it does not affect the home Church. When Abram's herdsmen and Lot's quarrelled, what troubled faithful Abram was that " the Canaanite was then in the land " looking on at the dissensions between brethren. Something like that is what we feel in this Moslem land! And the Persian Church feels it too.

That conference revealed to the Persian Christian a desire for organic unity in the Persian Church. It also revealed the differences of organisation in the "sending" Churches.

The next step forward was at the inter-mission conference under the chairmanship of Dr. Zwemer, held in Teheran in 1926. Dr. Zwemer had just visited the missions in north and south Persia, and his tour concluded with this inter-mission conference. One of the outstanding results of the conference was that the two missions planned co-operation on a scale hitherto not even considered. Literature is now prepared and published by a joint committee consisting of American and British missionaries with Persian Christians of the Church in north and south actively assisting. The production of a Church History in Persian, for the use of the Persian Church, and carrying the approval of the missionaries of both Churches, reveals a considerable stride forward in essential unity. So far no book has been turned down on the ground that either Church disagreed with the doctrine. This does not mean that we have produced a literature watered down to what we can all accept, but rather, as we humbly believe, it is an indication of the fulness of unity of thought and expression possible when we bring all our varied contributions to the touchstone of the love of God. Plans are now being considered for an inter-Church training school for evangelists and for an inter-Church divinity school for ordinands. We look forward to its being shortly unnecessary to speak of "inter-Church" work of any kind. The Church will be one. The Persia Inter-Mission Christian Council is an organised part of the International Missionary Council. These

are but indications showing whither we are deliberately travelling.

Many years ago " mission comity " was considered the correct thing to aim at, and in Persia we divided the country between the two missions, the 34th parallel being roughly the line of division. But the slogan of the conference in 1926 was, " There is no 34th parallel " ; and that exactly explains the present attitude of the Persian missions and the Persian Church. Some of us came away from that conference with a vision of a united mission as well as a united Church!

The Hamadan inter-Church conference (1925) decided to hold the next joint conference in Isfahan in 1927. Those two years in Persia were marked by great progress politically and otherwise. National feeling had grown very strong. The Shah initiated strong measures to bring about national unity. For example, it was laid down that in all schools, foreign and national, Persian must be used as the language of instruction up to a certain standard. This pressed hardly on Armenians and others whose mother tongue was other than Persian, but the Government realised that a united nation was not to be attained while a large section of the people did not speak Persian. The compulsory wearing of the Pahlavi costume was another step in the same direction. Up to this time, Jews and Parsis in many parts of the land had been compelled to wear a distinctive dress, and everywhere suffered many disabilities. Now, whatever their creed, they were all to be regarded as Persian subjects, and to dress and be treated accordingly. Thus Christians, converts from Islam, have actually claimed and obtained the right to be registered as Christian Persian subjects.

All this national feeling was bound to permeate the Church, and it has done so. The strong desire for national unity has most naturally found its parallel in the active efforts towards unity in the Church. At the conference in Isfahan one Persian Christian said, "You missionaries compose your differences, and we Persians will soon have a united Church." It is that sort of feeling among Persian Christians which makes missionaries feel keenly the sin of disunion. Unity is a vital matter affecting the very life of the Church, and is an immediate essential if the Church is to become an energising organism in the new Persia which is emerging from the chaos of ages. Persian Christians are naturally somewhat impatient when they hear that Church leaders, bishops and others, beg that these younger Churches will not imperil the larger unity by premature action in the mission field. They ask why their very existence should be imperilled because in England and elsewhere Christians cannot settle their age-long differences, which are so very little practical concern to the Church in Persia and other mission lands.

Who wants a United Church of Persia?

A prominent member of the Jerusalem Conference put this question to me, and said he understood that it was something which American Presbyterians were trying to foist on the Anglican Communion in Persia. To answer that question, I let my mind go back to the personnel of the inter-Church conference in Isfahan in 1927. One leading member had been a Moslem *mulla*. Another was of a *mujtahed* family; his father and brother were *mujtaheds* (*i.e.* doctors of Islamic Law).

He himself had been condemned to death for apostasy, and the first signature on his sentence was that of his *mujtahed* brother! Another had the distinction that his father and grandfather had been publicly executed a few years previously for highway robbery; they had been the Robin Hoods of Persia. Two members were ordained converts from Islam. Another was a Christian dervish with truly wonderful mystic insight into the things of God. One outstanding man was a *murshed* or priest of the Moslem sect of the "Ahl i Haqq," or People of the Truth. He is now a licensed preacher of the Gospel. Some were college-educated men who read and studied Dr. Headlam's books in preparation for this conference.

Men like these, and women equally influential, were the real force in this conference. Side by side with them sat Assyrians and Armenians; converts from Zoroastrianism and Judaism; and a delegation of missionaries from almost every mission station in Persia. At the Hamadan conference racial feeling was strong, and Armenians and Persians sat in separate groups. But to sit on that platform, and think of the age-long racial and religious animosity that had existed between the people represented there, and then to see them thus taking counsel together for the unity of the Church in Persia—that was something to stir one's soul to its very depths. These facts answer the question at the head of this section. Meshed and Seistan, on the borders of Afghanistan, were represented there. Urumia and Tabriz in the far north-west, Kermanshah and Hamadan in the West, Isfahan in the centre, Kerman and Yezd and Shiraz farther south, Resht and Teheran in the north. The mere

mention of these names in their geographical setting will help you to visualise the penetration of the Gospel into Persia and who were the people who had gathered together. Nothing but some strong compelling purpose could have done this. And the leaders were Persians.

IV. *Features of the Present Proposals for a United Church of Persia*

1. The report of the commission on the Church (which was unanimously approved by the conference) recorded with thanksgiving that the spirit of unity already exists to such a marked extent among the Christians of north and south Persia. But it was equally strongly felt that if this inward unity was to be permanent, the time had come when it ought to have a fuller outward expression.

2. But the report urged still further patience. It was too soon (in spite of the strong desire of the conference) to effect the complete organisation of a single Evangelical Church in Persia, chiefly for two reasons, viz. (*a*) the members of both Churches needed still further instruction in the implications of these proposals, particularly in the meaning, organisation and history of the Church; and (*b*) most of all because we of the episcopal Church had to say that we did not feel free to conclude such a union as would presumably be acceptable to the other Christians in Persia. But the report presented certain "Fundamental Principles of Union" to serve as a doctrinal and practical basis for a united Evangelical Church of Persia. It will be observed that the commission was influenced by the

findings of the committee of bishops and Free Church leaders which met at Lambeth under the chairmanship of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, following the last Lambeth Conference. These fundamental principles are here given *in extenso* from the official English translation.

1. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain God's supreme revelation of truth, which is summed up in the Person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ; and nothing should be required as an article of faith which is not read therein or may not be proved thereby.

2. We accept the Apostles' Creed as a simple statement of the main tenets of the Christian belief and an appropriate Confession of Faith to be used at the time of Baptism. We regard the Nicene Creed as a fuller statement of Christian belief and a more adequate expression of the corporate faith of the Church. We believe that the use of these creeds in worship, while not binding on any Church, will prove a helpful expression of united belief; and we feel that assent to them should allow of reasonable liberty of interpretation.

3. While accepting these creeds as a historical expression of faith, we also recognise the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church as a competent Guide both to new understanding and expression of truth and in the future development of the Church.

4. We regard the Church as the Body of Christ and His Spirit abiding in its members as the source of its life. There can be only one Church, and this Church consists of all those in times past and present who have been saved through faith in Christ. As a visible organisation the Church was founded by Christ as the means of the growth of the Kingdom of God on earth. Local Churches are representatives and parts of the one Catholic Church.

5. We look upon the following as necessary outward

marks of the Church: (*a*) Profession of faith in God as incarnate in Christ. (*b*) Christian conduct on the part of its members. (*c*) Fellowship in Christian worship. (*d*) Observance of the Sacraments ordained by Christ. (*e*) Ministering officers to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and maintain the unity and purity of the Church.

6. Whereas local Churches should be free to adopt such forms of worship as they may choose, a closer approach to a common standard than now exists, and one better adapted to the Persian genius, is highly desirable.

7. The Sacraments ordained by Christ are two: Baptism, the sign of admission to the Church; and the Lord's Supper, the sign of fellowship with Christ.

8. We regard the ministering officers of the Church as representatives of the whole Church and as receiving their authority and commission from the Church as a whole. We believe that the ministering officers of the United Church of Persia should be elected by this Church, and should be recognised by every part of it as endued with authority to perform all the functions pertaining to their offices throughout this Church; and all the ministers of either section, ordained to office by the laying-on of hands before the consummation of the union, should thereafter be similarly recognised.

9. We feel that in the United Church of Persia the offices of *Episcopos* and *Presbuteros*, both mentioned in the New Testament, should be preserved in some form, and that at the same time the rights of the local congregation, in accordance with New Testament teaching, should be fully guarded, so as to produce and preserve the harmonious working of the whole body of the Church and to prevent undue concentration of power in the hands of a single person or group of persons.

10. We feel that in the United Church of Persia no distinction as to race or nationality should be made a qualification for membership or office-holding, though

we earnestly look forward to the time when the highest offices shall be held by national ministers.

11. We believe that the United Church of Persia ought to be subject to the jurisdiction of no existing division of the Church, but must be free and unhampered in working out its own development, though we most earnestly anticipate its being a constituent part of the great reunited Church, and we urge that every forward step be taken with this in mind.

There are a few points in the foregoing which deserve notice. In paragraph No. 8 it is laid down that the ministers are to be regarded as being ministers of the whole Church of God. It is not a "congregational" ministry. Also, no question is raised as to the validity of the orders of those who have been ordained by the laying-on of hands prior to the consummation of the union. In the "Memorandum on the Status of the Existing Free Church Ministry" presented on behalf of the Church of England representatives on the Joint Conference, the reality of Free Church ministries as ministries in the universal Church is frankly recognised.[1]

At the Isfahan Conference in 1927 this document was before the commission which drew up the Report on the Church, and, carrying as it did the weight of such names as those of the late and the present Archbishops of Canterbury, the Bishop of London and others, profoundly influenced the commission. The attitude of the commission and of the conference was, that as acknowledged leaders in the Anglican Church thus openly avowed their belief in the reality of such orders as are here under consideration, and that they are real

[1] For the terms of this memorandum see Essay V (*b*), p. 130.

ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the universal Church, the Church of Persia cannot be wrong in declaring that it is prepared to accept the orders of all ministers of either section thus ordained by the laying-on of hands before the consummation of the union. We do not ask for either "conditional re-ordination" or "re-ordination all round."

In paragraph No. 9, the commission reported and the conference accepted that in the united Church of Persia the offices of bishop and presbyter should be preserved in some form. In common with other Churches seeking to unite, we are not prepared to lay down any theory as to episcopacy. And we do not say that the episcopacy of the united Church of Persia will be based on any theory of Apostolical succession. But we are prepared to stand by episcopacy, thus reverting to the ancient form of Church government in the old Persian Church.

It was also natural in the present state of national feeling in Persia that the Church should desire to be free and unhampered in working out its own development (para. No. 11), and the Isfahan Conference appointed me to present to the Lambeth Conference in 1930 some statement of the present position of the Evangelical Churches in Persia, their fervent desire for union, their present plastic state and so forth. The conference called attention to the close agreement of the "fundamental principles with those adopted by the joint conference of the representatives of the Church of England and the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches at Lambeth," and petitions whatever body has authority to do so, to extend to the diocese of Persia independence from the See of Canterbury, in

order that we may be free to take such steps as we feel led of God to take, toward the consummation of the union of the Evangelical Churches of Persia on the basis of the above statement of fundamental principles. The conference similarly asks the East Persia Presbytery to take steps to secure from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America the dissolution of that Presbytery. Presbyterian missionaries assure us that this request needs only to be made to be granted.

The conference also expressed the opinion that if and when we in Persia are ready and prepared to complete such organisation of a united Church of Persia, the fact that in other countries they are not thus ready ought not to prejudice the formation of a national Persian Church, nor ought the formation of a national Persian Church to be regarded as prejudicing in any way the larger unity for which we all pray.

It was further strongly desired that at all future ordinations prior to the consummation of the union, both the bishop and some ordained ministers from the Presbyterian Church should take part in such ordination. This has obvious difficulties, but also obvious advantages in view of the future.

When one considers the strong desire on the part of Persian Christians to have a united Persian Church, one realises what an act of patience it was on their part to postpone action until after the Lambeth Conference in 1930. But many of us detected a note running through the discussions, which perhaps was a warning, that they propose after that conference to take their own line, and give outward expression to a unity which so manifestly exists, and which is deeper than any outward

form. It is planned to hold the next inter-Church conference at Teheran in 1931.

V. *Urgency of the Need for a United Church of Persia*

1. The Persian Church at present is small in numbers, but vigorous and missionary and strongly national. It exists in a Moslem land, under the Shari'at or Islamic Law. It is claiming a place in the life of the nation, but if it is to secure this, it can do so most effectively if it is united in outward organisation as well as in inward aspirations. The Government is not likely to consider seriously the demands or requests of a number of separated Christian Churches. It is more likely to pay serious attention to a united body of Persians, largely converts from Islam, who speak as "the Persian Church" and claim to have a part in the fellowship of the nation.

2. The ecclesiastical thought of the Church at present is in a fluid state. The urgency from this point of view is that the outward organisation of the Persian Church be begun before the differing present forms harden, so introducing difficulties with which we are but too well acquainted in the home Church. In north and south, so far, no very rigid ideas are held as to episcopacy or presbyterianism. The fact that Christians are members of one or the other of these Churches is accidental. Perhaps we missionaries ought to have taught them more of the differences and divisions of the Church and the historical causes of the same, but there were so many other things to teach that seemed more important!

3. Our Lord's teaching in St. John xvii. comes home

with peculiar significance in a Moslem land. The faith of Islam is expressed in its Creed: "There is no God but Allah, and it is *Mohammed whom God has sent*," as the well-known words may almost literally be translated. But our Lord says, "That they might know Thee, the only true God, and *Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent*." The parallel is striking. Is it Jesus or Mohammed whom "God has sent"? Our Lord prays, "That they all may be one, that the world may know *that Thou hast sent me*." It is therefore by means of a unity in the Church which the world can see, that the world of Islam will come to faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. Therein lies the real urgency for us out here.

It is hard to believe that the Christian Church would be justified at the bar of God if it held up such a movement as this towards the fulfilment of our Lord's own prayer. If such new circumstances have arisen as would justify new methods being used, then it seems equally obligatory to use these methods. This would seem to be the adventure of faith to which the Lambeth Conference called us. And the Persian Church, young as it is, virile and spiritual as it is, asks to be allowed to make the adventure. Surely it is a reasonable and natural request and one that will be accorded not only ungrudgingly, but gladly and with thanksgiving.

VIII

THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNITY OVERSEAS—INDIA

By The Rev. Canon A. W. Davies, D.Litt.; Secretary of the Missionary Council of the Church Assembly, formerly Principal of St. John's College, Agra, and Canon of Lucknow.

On February 11th, 1928, the eleven bishops of the Anglican Church in India, on the first occasion of their meeting in synod after the enactment of the Indian Church Measure and the Indian Church Act for the dissolution of the legal connection of the Anglican Church in India with the Church of England, "deeming it to be a matter of no small importance at such a turning point in the history of the Church that the faithful should be assisted to distinguish the enduring from the transitory elements in their heritage, and to know what they should hold fast themselves and commend to others, as having value and significance, not for one nation only, but for all the people of the world," made, and resolved at the request of the General Council to prefix to the Constitution of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, a prefatory statement concerning the inheritance and ideals of that Church. The draft of this statement had been discussed by Diocesan Councils and by the General Council at several sessions, and suggestions made by these bodies were taken into consideration by the bishops before the statement was approved and

issued by them. It may be taken therefore to represent the mind and outlook of the Anglican Church in India.

The whole document is of unusual interest, but the first paragraph sufficiently indicates the character of the statement, and makes clear that the Anglican Church in India, as it turns its face to the great tasks which lie before it, is not unmindful of the rock from which it is hewn.

> "The Church of India, Burma and Ceylon is a part of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, the body of Christ, which He is building up out of all generations and races of men. We are what we are as a Church and as members of the Church by reason of what we have received from Him through and in the holy catholic Church."

It is this strong sense of continuity with, and loyalty to the Catholic Church of the ages on the one hand, and a wide and courageous conception of its vocation among the various races, religions and castes of modern India on the other, that gives its special significance and importance to the scheme of union drawn up by a joint committee of accredited representatives of the Anglican Church in India, the South India United Church and the South India Provincial Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

The area of the proposed union is South India; that is to say, the Madras Presidency and the States of Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin. The Roman Church, with its relatively large membership, is not concerned in the negotiations, nor the ancient "Jacobite Syrian" Church of Travancore, nor the reformed "Mar Thoma Syrian" Church; nor will

the proposed union include the American Lutheran and Baptist Churches. It is not yet certain whether the diocese of Colombo and the Wesleyan province of Ceylon would wish to be included. The Anglican dioceses immediately concerned are Madras; Tinnevelly, Madura and Ramnad; Dornakal; and the diocese of Travancore and Cochin, although the whole Anglican Church in India, Burma and Ceylon has taken part in the negotiations.

The grounds on which it was decided at an early stage to restrict the field of union to the South are, first, that the southern Churches and dioceses concerned are preponderatingly Indian in membership, and have, at any rate among their leaders, a keen desire for union, while the corresponding Churches in north India are at present much more largely European in membership (almost the whole of the British Army in India is stationed in the north), and are only now beginning at all seriously to take up questions of union. Secondly, the Christians in South India form a relatively homogeneous group, Dravidian in language and race, which is sharply distinguished from the northern group. It may be added that Church tradition and organisation are much more deeply rooted and, in many respects, much less foreign in the south than in the north, where Christianity among Indians is still, on the whole, at the mission rather than at the Church stage. Thus the membership of the three uniting Churches in South India is almost entirely drawn from a people that are united in language, customs and cultural inheritance. The total of the communities connected with the three Churches amounts to more than three quarters of a million souls, of whom 395,000 are connected with the

Anglican, 110,000 with the Wesleyan, and 230,000 with the South Indian United Church.

The history of this South Indian United Church is itself interesting. It was constituted as the result of a movement towards union the first definite steps of which were taken in the year 1900, when the American Arcot Mission (Presbyterian) and the Free Church of Scotland Mission constituted the first synod of the "South India United Church." In 1904 the Presbyterian Churches in India, which had been striving more or less continuously for forty-three years to overcome in India the results of the circumstances and controversies which, both in Scotland and America, had created their divisions, succeeded in bringing together and uniting in one all-India Presbyterian Church almost, and yet not quite, all the separate Presbyterian bodies. Into this larger union passed naturally the synod of the South India United Church. In doing so, however, the synod made it clear that if the way for a wider union with its neighbour Churches in the south were opened up it would be free to sever its organic connection with the Presbyterian Church of India in the interests of a larger local union.

In 1905 the missions and Churches founded more or less upon Congregational principles by the London Missionary Society and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions constituted the first General Assembly of the "General Union of the United Churches in South India." This body, through a joint committee, continued its negotiations with the South India Synod of the Presbyterian Church, and in the year 1907 the Presbyterian Church in India handed over its South India Synod to be part of the South

India United Church, and the first General Assembly of the body with which the Anglican and Wesleyan Churches are now proposing to unite was held in the same year.

The particular movement which has resulted in the present proposals was initiated at an informal meeting at Tranquebar, in South India, in May 1919. Ministers of various denominations had been meeting together in connection with a joint evangelistic effort, and at the close of the conference Bishop Azariah of Dornakal and an Indian minister of the South India United Church issued a joint invitation to representatives of their Churches to remain for a conference on the subject of reunion. This second conference, composed almost exclusively of Indians, spent two days in discussion and prayer, and then issued an appeal to the Churches in South India to consider the question of union. Two Churches, the Anglican and the South India United Church, responded to the appeal. Cordial resolutions were passed by the episcopal synod of the Anglican Church, and by the General Assembly of the South India United Church, and the former appointed a committee " to confer with representatives of the South India United Church and to discuss measures of agreement and the points of difference between the two bodies."

The Joint Committee held its first meeting in March 1920, and was able at this first meeting to register the following important points of agreement:—

" We are agreed:

1. That the only union which Christians should aim at is the union of all who acknowledge the name of Christ in the Universal Church which is His Body;

and that the test of all local schemes of union is that they should express locally the principles of the great Catholic unity of the Body of Christ. Our only desire, therefore, is so to organise the Church in India that it shall give the Indian expression of the spirit, the thought and the life of the Church Universal.

2. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary to salvation, and are the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

3. That we accept the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed as containing a sufficient statement of the faith of the Church for a basis of fellowship.

4. That the two Sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, are to be ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.

5*a*. That, believing that the principle of the historic episcopate in a constitutional form is that which is more likely than any other to promote and preserve the unity of the Church, we accept it as a basis of unity without raising other questions about episcopacy.

5*b*. That by a historic and constitutional episcopate we mean:

(1) That the bishops be elected by representatives of the diocese and approved by representatives of the province;

(2) That the bishops shall perform their duties constitutionally in accordance with such customs of the Church as shall be defined in a written constitution; and

(3) That continuity with the historic episcopate be effectively maintained, it being understood that no particular interpretation of the fact of the historic episcopate be demanded.

6. (1) That after union all future ordinations to the presbyterate (ministry) would be performed by laying-on of hands of the bishops and presbyters (ministers), and

(2) That all consecrations of bishops would be

performed by bishops, not less than three taking part in each consecration.

7. (1) That the Church in India ought to be independent of the state;

(2) That the Church in India must be free from any control, legal or otherwise, of any Church or society outside of India; and

(3) That while the Church in India is free from such control it would regulate its acts by the necessity of maintaining fellowship with other branches of the Catholic Church with which we are now in communion."

Agreement on these important points thus early reached was maintained to the end, though the fact that it was not until the year 1925 that the Wesleyan delegation joined in the negotiations made it necessary carefully to review the steps already taken.

All these points are included in the provision of the scheme as finally issued by the Joint Committee, the important statement on Faith and Order in the section on the basis of union being as follows:—

> The uniting Churches hold the faith which the Church has ever held in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind; and in accordance with the revelation of God which He made, being Himself God incarnate, they worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.
>
> They accept the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation and as the ultimate standard of faith.
>
> They accept the Apostles' Creed and the Creed commonly called the Nicene, as witnessing to and safeguarding that faith, which is continuously confirmed in the spiritual experience of the Church of Christ, and as containing a sufficient statement thereof for a basis of union.

They believe that the Sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, ordained by Christ Himself, are means of grace through which God works in us; and agree that they should be ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.

They believe that the Ministry is a gift of God to His Church; that God Himself calls men into the Ministry through His Holy Spirit, and that their vocation is to lead God's people in worship, prayer and praise, and through pastoral ministrations, the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments (all these made effective by faith) to assist men to receive the saving and sanctifying benefits of Christ and to fit them for service; and they believe that in ordination God, in answer to the prayer of His Church, bestows on and assures to those whom He has called and His Church has accepted for any particular form of the Ministry a commission for it and the grace appropriate to it, which grace, if humbly used, will enable the ministers to perform the same.

In the autumn the bishops returned to India, after attending the meetings of the Lambeth Conference, at which they had taken their part in the framing and passing of the Appeal to all Christian People on the subject of the reunion of Christendom. The meetings of the Joint Committee were resumed, and serious and prolonged attempts were made to solve the questions of intercommunion and of the status of ministers ordained in the uniting Churches before the union, and of foreign missionaries already ministering or after union to be welcomed as ministers in the united Church. Meanwhile the General Assembly of the South India United Church had recorded " its opinion

that the South India United Church should be willing for the sake of doing what it can to forward the cause of union in Christendom, to accept a constitutional episcopacy as defined in its resolution of September 1919, and at the same time, that it expresses its position that the S.I.U.C. cannot enter a union which will cut it off from those Churches with which it is now in full communion." The Anglican Provincial (now called General) Council, at its meeting in January 1922, recorded " its thankfulness to Almighty God for the progress which has been made by the Joint Committee on union."

In the following year the proposal for a mutual commissioning service for all ministers of the uniting Churches, as suggested in the Lambeth Appeal, was explored. But this proposal, as in England, proved to be unacceptable, and was abandoned.

At the sixth meeting, in 1926, the Anglican representatives were in possession of the opinions of some of the leading Anglican scholars in England whom the Metropolitan had consulted. At this meeting agreement was at last reached upon the difficult question of the status of the present South India United Church and Wesleyan ministers, and of the missionaries who should come from the Free Churches of Britain and America to work in South India. The wording and some of the provisions of these resolutions were subsequently altered, but important principles were laid down. The Committee " unanimously recommended that in order to secure the full mutual recognition of the ministries of the uniting Churches, the existing ministers of the three Churches be accepted as ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the Church after

union," although strict control was to be exercised over the transfer of ministers of one uniting Church to the congregations of another. It was also resolved that for a period of fifty years " ministers ordained in the Churches which have planted the missions now connected with the uniting Churches may be received as ministers of the United Church, if they are willing to make the same declarations with regard to the faith and constitution of the united Church as are required from persons about to be ordained or employed for the first time in the united Church." This resolution ended with the following words: " It is the intention of those who make the union that at the close of that period no one shall minister in the Church unless he has received regular episcopal ordination."

With regard to the question of intercommunion it was resolved that " it will not be a condition of union that any of the uniting Churches or any of the ministers or members of them shall forego any rights of communion with other Churches that it or he possessed before the union." Certain paragraphs were added to indicate that the Church as a whole and the dioceses severally would exercise control in these matters, and that every effort would be made to avoid disputes and to preserve and promote unity.

The General Assembly of the South India United Church in 1927 re-appointed its committee, but expressed itself in very cautious terms, instructing its committee " to confer with the other sections of the Joint Committee with a view to finding a solution of the problems of the ministry and of intercommunion more acceptable to the Church than those of the sixth meeting."

The Anglican General Council at its meeting in February 1928 also considered the report of this sixth meeting and passed the following carefully worded resolution:—

> Resolved: that we have received the report of the Joint Committee on Union with great thankfulness, in that it indicates the deepening desire for unity, and suggests a way to complete unity which we desire should be fully explored.
>
> Remembering that the Constitutional Episcopate has been accepted for the united Church, and that the clearly expressed intention is to secure an episcopally ordained ministry throughout the Church, we are prepared, with a view to bridging over the period till this is fully attained, that to all who at the time of union are ministers of the uniting Churches should be accorded after union the position of ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the united Church.
>
> But just as we do not ask that ministers of the S.I.U.C. and the Wesleyan Church should deny their lifelong belief in the grace given to them by the laying-on of hands, or that the members of these Churches should deny the validity of the Sacraments which they have been accustomed to receive, so we ask for respect for the beliefs of those who have learned to connect the grace given to them in the Holy Communion with an episcopally ordained ministry."

The council therefore requested that it be specifically provided in the terms of union that Anglicans shall not be deprived of any opportunities which they previously enjoyed of receiving the Holy Communion at the hands of an episcopally ordained minister, and more specifically that conscientious convictions be safeguarded by a proviso that no non-episcopally ordained

minister should either temporarily or permanently be placed in charge of a congregation accustomed to an episcopally ordained ministry. They offered to accept any corresponding proviso desired by the other uniting Churches.

The Joint Committee met again in June 1928 at Bangalore. It reviewed and in some cases restated the points on which full and satisfactory agreement had already been reached, and it considered afresh the difficult questions of the ministry and intercommunion, fortified by the Anglican General Council's specific approval of its proposal that to all who at the time of union are ministers of the uniting Churches should be accorded after union the position of ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the united Church. It had to satisfy the Anglican request for a definite assurance, as one of the terms of union, that no non-episcopally ordained minister should either temporarily or permanently be put in charge of any of the present Anglican congregations, and to allay the anxiety of the South India United Church and the Wesleyan Church lest the terms of union should contain anything which could be justifiably interpreted as casting doubt upon the status of their ministries.

Hope lay in the traditional regard of the Free Churches for the individual conscience. The S.I.U.C. and Wesleyan delegates were prepared to go almost all lengths to protect this, and at the Bangalore meeting a resolution was passed declaring that the Church authorities would not against the will of the individuals concerned terminate any opportunities which Anglicans in any particular place enjoyed of receiving Communion at the hands of an episcopally ordained

minister, nor would a non-episcopally ordained minister be placed in charge of an Anglican congregation so long as objection was signified by a single communicant member of that congregation.

Even these provisos did not satisfy the letter of the Anglican Council's requirements, while their rigidity was distasteful to the delegates of the other two Churches. Accordingly the Joint Committee addressed itself to the difficult problem again at its final meeting held at Madras. The non-Anglican delegates were as determined as ever that the conscientious scruples of no single individual should be offended by any action of the united Church, but they felt that if every member of a congregation wished to be ministered to by a certain minister of the united Church it would be intolerable tyranny if the same constitution which declared him to be a minister of the Word and Sacraments in the Church should also contain a provision disqualifying him from ministering to an Anglican congregation.

In its final scheme therefore the Joint Committee meets the difficulty in another way, by proposing to the uniting Churches that they should not attempt to make definite regulations in these matters, but express a mutual pledge that if during the process of the Churches growing together into complete unity difficulties and anomalies arise, " the united Church will be careful not to allow any over-riding of conscience by Church authorities or by majorities, nor will it in its administrative acts knowingly transgress the long-established traditions of any of the uniting Churches."

The section dealing with the position of missionaries was also redrafted. The period during which it is

definitely agreed that non-episcopally ordained missionaries " may be received as ministers of the United Church " is reduced from fifty to thirty years, but instead of adding that " it is the intention of those who make the union that at the close of that period no one shall minister in the Church unless he has received regular episcopal ordination," the section is made to open with the statement that " the uniting Churches agree that it is their intention and expectation that eventually every minister exercising a permanent ministry in the united Church will be an episcopally ordained minister." They add that " after this period of thirty years the united Church will consider and decide the question of such exceptions to the general principle of an episcopally ordained ministry." The whole section on the ministers and members of the united Church deserves careful study, but is too long to quote in full.[1]

The relation of the united Church to the Churches with which the three uniting Churches are at present in fellowship or communion presents a problem of extreme difficulty. The suggestion that in order to enter this new union any one of the uniting Churches would be required to forgo rights and privileges in connection with other Churches which it at present enjoys needs only to be made to be rejected. But if this be so, then the immediate result of the union will be that the united Church will be in communion with Churches which are not in communion with each other. The relations between the Church of England and the Church of Sweden can be cited as a precedent, but the anomaly in the case of the proposed union will be

[1] See the *Proposed Scheme of Union*, S.P.C.K.

very much more challenging. The Joint Committee frankly accepts what is involved in its proposals: "The uniting Churches hope," it is stated, "that invitations to the Lambeth Conference may be extended to the bishops of the united Church, and that those bishops will, whenever possible, accept such invitations; and that similarly affiliation with or membership in the World Presbyterian Alliance, the World Union of Congregational Churches and the Ecumenical Methodist Conference may be granted to the united Church, and that it will, whenever possible, send delegates to the meetings of those bodies."

Again, "The uniting Churches agree that every minister of the united Church shall be at liberty to exercise any ministry in a Church outside its area which he was entitled to exercise before the union." But they do not suggest that he will be able to require any other Church to accept his ministrations, for they add, "but this right can only be extended to such other Churches outside the area of the union as are willing to receive his ministrations."

In not insisting on the acceptance of Confirmation as a condition of communicant membership by the South India United Church and the Wesleyan Church, the Anglican delegates were acting in accordance with their deliberate purpose not to insist upon anything which is purely Anglican. Neither in the Roman nor in the Orthodox Church is it made the door of access to Communion. What is stated in the scheme is that "until the Synod of the Church shall frame general rules with regard to full or communicant membership, either the rite of confirmation administered by a bishop of the Church, or such a service of admission to full

membership as was in use in the South India United Church before the union, or such a service for the recognition of new members as was in use in the Wesleyan Church in South India before the union, shall be employed in admitting persons to full or communicant membership of the united Church, and persons so admitted shall be recognised as communicants throughout the whole Church." Doubtless the Anglican members of the committee would have been glad to see the rite of Confirmation accepted by all the uniting Churches quite apart from its use as a condition of admission to Communion; but they felt it impossible to insist upon this as one of the essential terms of union. The conditions of its administration vary very widely in different branches of the Catholic Church, and it is not included among the conditions mentioned in the Lambeth Appeal. There is good reason to expect that, provided that the issue is not forced, a custom of such universality and antiquity will win its way throughout the united Church upon its own merits.

Only the most important and most controversial features of the scheme have here been dealt with, but the whole document is marked by thoroughness and courage, and will repay the most careful study. The recovery of the diaconate as a separate order, with well-defined functions; the important place given to the laity; the constitution and functions of the governing bodies of the Church—all these reveal ways in which the united Church will be enriched. The section on the Worship of the Church suggests new possibilities in the combination of freedom and order in its services. A chapter on the relation of the united Church to the Indian Church statutory rules and to the General

Council provides a solution of the difficulties involved in the special obligation laid upon the Anglican Church in India in respect of the English Churches in important centres. The suggested procedure for making alterations in the constitution provides safeguards against any easy tinkering with fundamental principles. Many parts of the scheme are still only outlines, but enough detail has been given to indicate very clearly the general lines of the process by which it is hoped the three uniting Churches will grow together into a united Church.

The Joint Committee has done its work, and decisions have now to be taken. By the time these words are read the South India United Church will have given at least some indication of its attitude to the completed scheme. Early in 1930 the Episcopal Synod and the General Council, meeting in Calcutta, will give their judgment. They have already decided that the detailed scheme shall be submitted for consideration to the Lambeth Conference next summer. Any expression of opinion by the Lambeth Conference will carry great weight with the General Council, but the last word must be spoken in India, and not in England.

Yet it is only natural that the South India proposals should have created a stir in England, for no scheme of union so definite and so far-reaching has yet been considered by the Church of England. And everything depends upon the spirit in which it is discussed, for the proposals themselves are of such intrinsic interest and raise issues of so controversial a character that there is grave danger lest they be regarded merely as subjects for debate and speculation, or, even worse, as useful material for party controversy, instead of as

questions of life and death to the Church of Christ in India.

Discussion in India has been wonderfully free from controversy, not because the Anglican Church has been represented solely by Evangelicals, for this is very far from being the case, nor because the southern dioceses of India are mainly Evangelical in outlook, which is perhaps true. The absence of party controversy is due partly to the growth of what has been called a "Great Church sense" in India, but still more to the fact that the discussions have been carried on in a country in which unity, social, racial, political, religious, is the supreme need, and where the divisions between Christians are therefore peculiarly deplorable. As the Bishop of Dornakal said at Lausanne, "Unity may be theoretically a desirable ideal in Europe and America, but it is vital to the life of the Church in the Mission Field. The divisions of Christendom may be a source of weakness in Christian countries, but in non-Christian lands they are a sin and a scandal." [1]

It is held by some in England that this sense of urgency has deflected the judgment of the Anglican Church in India. The sense of urgency and adventure does not warp the mind: it releases it. The Church at home is not qualified to form a sound judgment on such momentous issues unless it can recapture the pioneering spirit of the first century or of the mission field to-day.

Anglican critics in England are moved by the fear that the Church in India, if it accepts these conditions, will be false to fundamental Catholic principles and

[1] Sermon preached at Lausanne: see Appendix to "*Faith and Order*."

enter upon a course which will lead it further and further away from the main stream of Catholic tradition. They fear, too, that the Church of England, if it accepts these conditions, will proclaim itself unequivocally one of the Protestant Churches, and so forfeit its claim to be an authentic branch of the historic Catholic Church, thus postponing indefinitely its hope of reunion with the Orthodox and Roman Churches.

The framers of the scheme on the other hand maintain that while specifically Anglican characteristics have not been insisted upon, fundamental Catholic principles have been safeguarded for the future, so far as one generation can expect to be able to bind posterity; that such departures from Catholic practice as are contemplated are of a temporary character; that the difficulties and anomalies, which they admit are involved in the scheme, are justified by the confident hope that it will make possible not only the uniting of separate Christian forces in India, but also the enriching of each by the heritage of the others, and the bringing of the whole into organic union with the historic Catholic and Apostolic Church under conditions which would be bound to stimulate movements towards reunion on a Catholic basis throughout the world. If this opportunity is not taken, the movement towards union among the Protestant Churches in India will indeed go forward, but without the very great contribution which the Anglican Church, they believe, could make; while the Anglican Church itself will dwindle into little more than a foreign sect.

If the critics of the scheme are right; if the Anglican Church in India has allowed itself to be led to the

brink of surrender of great Christian principles, and is contemplating the adoption of such a short cut to success as the Founder and Head of the Church put behind Him once for all at the Temptation, then, whatever may seem to be the inevitable consequences, it ought to draw back. But it must be very sure of its position. It must remember how very hard it is to separate principle from instinctive preference. A universal society built up out of all generations and races of men will have to be a home for the Scotsman as well as the Latin, for many types beside the "Catholic-minded person" for whom Bishop Gore pleads. We have evidence enough of the extreme difficulty with which any associations of men that have gathered traditions and developed on different lines can be brought together again into a single body. The longing for union will have to be nothing short of passionate if it is to bring Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Wesleyan; Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical; Indian, American, Englishman into one united Church.

It has been the aim of the Anglican members of the Joint Committee to test all proposals in the light of fundamental Catholic principle, and it has been the hope of the non-Anglican members that the very real concessions which they have made, and have not made easily, will enable Anglo-Catholics, without abandoning their principles, to accept these proposals. For there is no desire on the part of members of the South India United Church or of the Wesleyans to unite with a party in the Church of England.

But it is not to be expected that Churchmen who approach questions of Church order from the Anglo-Catholic point of view will give approval without grave

anxiety and searching of heart. It has not been without grave searching of heart that men of like views in India have been led to believe that God is calling the Church to this adventure. It will be very unfortunate if Evangelicals in England should imagine that the doubts and anxieties which some of the proposals have raised are merely the result of factious and party feeling. Nor can we hope that a centuries-old controversy will be settled in a few months. The Joint Committee has no such hope. It realises that to wait until the Anglican Church has reached a common mind on questions of order would be indefinitely to postpone all possibility of union. It realises that the controversy will be carried over unsettled into the United Church of South India. What it has striven to do is to avoid all action or statements which will make it impossible for persons who hold what are generally distinguished as the Catholic or the Protestant view on questions of Church order to continue to hold and teach their views in the united Church.

The decision to be taken is momentous. It is not possible merely to mark time. For ten years these negotiations have been going on. We must go forward now, or back. To many who are not "Catholic-minded persons" the risk will be well worth taking, for it will seem, perhaps, to be small. But for those who have been accustomed to connect the most precious benefits and the deepest experiences of religion with conditions which they fear may not be assured to the Christians of India under the proposed scheme, it will not be easy to approve. "We may be wrong," they will say, "in opposing this scheme. We may be found to have been fighting against God.

That is a terrible thought, and a terrible responsibility. But we have searched our own consciences, and we know that our action springs from our deepest convictions, and is the measure of the value which we set upon those things which we believe our Lord to have committed to His Church. And if in spite of all we are mistaken, surely God of His mercy will not allow His Church permanently to suffer for our mistake."

We can only, I think, remind them that just this would have been the plea of the Jewish leaders who had to answer Peter and John. Just this the plea of the Council of Jerusalem when faced with alarming developments at Antioch. We shall remind them that the whole story of progress on this earth is the story of new adventure; that the story of faith is the story of men and movements casting themselves into the unknown with God, the story of talents risked in uncertain enterprise, not hidden and guarded with anxious fear. And we shall say that we recognise that we too may be mistaken, but since risk there must be, we think the Church should take the risk of being precipitate in action, rather than the risk of being disobedient to a heavenly vision.

It may well be that theologians in England will be able to suggest a better solution of some of the difficult problems with which the Joint Committee was faced. It is certain that any such proposals will be very carefully considered, but it is equally certain that no solution is likely to be discovered which will not demand from all the co-operating parties sympathy, unselfishness and patience on the one hand, and on the other the spirit of adventure, courage and hope.

IX

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND NON-EPISCOPAL MINISTRIES: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

By The Ven. J. W. Hunkin, B.D., Archdeacon of Coventry.

IN looking backwards it is important for us from the outset to bear in mind the fact that the past is never a complete guide to the future. We have not only to learn its lessons, but to advance beyond them to a solution of the fresh problems created by new situations. Especially is this true at the present time and in regard to the question of reunion. The problem of reunion presents itself not only with an unparalleled urgency, but in certain new aspects. The Church of England as established at "the Elizabethan settlement" has never yet quite squarely faced the question of its relation to the Christians in this country who have organised themselves apart from it; or to the converts to the Christian faith made by the blessing of God on their missionary efforts in other lands.

It is abundantly clear that the Church of England does not "unchurch" these Christians, or deny that they have inherited the grace of God in their hearts and lives and in their organisations and ministries. To do so, indeed, would surely be to sin against the Holy Ghost. Yet it has been really difficult for the Anglican Church to decide how far it ought to go in recognising the status of the now separate and independent families established by those who originally

were its own children. The fact that the Church itself is considerably (to say the least) to blame for the separation does not make matters any easier. The truth is that it has been clinging to the hope of gradually re-absorbing the separated elements. Nor in the past has there been altogether wanting evidence which has afforded some ground for such a hope. But now it is important that Churchmen should be thoroughly awakened to the fact that, taking the world-situation as a whole, and noting particularly the state of Christianity in the United States of America, it is obvious that the time for such absorption has gone by. As well entertain the hope that Great Britain will re-absorb the United States of America as one of its dependencies!

Yet, as it will readily be granted that nothing is more desirable in the interests of civilisation than an ever-increasing harmony and union between the two great English-speaking peoples, so it is equally clear that the truest and deepest unity between Anglicans and Free Churchmen is most earnestly to be sought for. Nay, it is still clearer. For Great Britain and the United States of America are separated by the Atlantic Ocean, but Anglicans and Free Churchmen are to be found side by side in town and village, both at home and abroad.

At the outset of this essay, then, it must be insisted that the present problem—the problem of the relation between the Anglican Church and the Free Churches here and overseas—is not a problem which the Church of England has yet clearly and resolutely faced. It is a problem the solution of which is now overdue, and the Anglican Church must set itself seriously to solve it.

The past affords no exact precedents. What we do find are problems which offer some points of similarity to those of the present. This essay is devoted to a review of one such problem—the problem of the relation of the Church of England to ministers of other Churches not episcopally ordained.

The Sixteenth Century

To the first generation of reformers in England the relation between themselves and the ministers of the reformed Churches which had not retained episcopal ordination scarcely presented itself as a problem at all. Thus John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester (1551), writes: "I believe the Church is bound to no sort of ministers or any ordinary succession of bishops . . . but unto the only Word of God." [1] So also Cranmer: "The ministers of God's word under his majesty be the bishops, parsons, vicars, and such other priests as be appointed by his highness to that ministration. . . . In the admission of many of these officers be divers comely ceremonies and solemnities used, which be not of necessity, but only for a good order, and seemly fashion: for if such offices and ministrations were committed without such solemnity, they were nevertheless truly committed. And there is no more promise of God, that grace is given in the committing of the ecclesiastical office, than it is in the committing of the civil office." [2] Similarly John

[1] *Later Writings*, p. 90.

[2] *Remains and Letters, Works* (Parker Society), Vol. II., p. 116. Cranmer held that the ministry of bishops, priests and deacons could be traced back to apostolic times; cf. Preface to the Ordinal (1550 and 1552).

Jewel, the learned Bishop of Salisbury (1560–1571), maintained that God's grace was not promised to sees and successions, but to them that fear Him.[1]

What the English reformers chiefly cared about was doctrine, and they had the greatest respect for the teaching of the continental reformers. So Jewel writes to Peter Martyr in 1562: "As to matters of doctrine we have pared everything away to the very quick, and do not differ from your doctrine by a nail's breadth." [2] And Cranmer is at pains to defend the English for deliberately retaining more of the old order of things than the continental reformers had done: "The book which was of very late time given to the Church of England by the King's authority and the Parliament, containing the manner and form of praying and ministering the Sacraments in the Church of England, likewise also the book of ordering ministers of the Church, set forth by the aforesaid authority, are godly and in no point repugnant to the wholesome doctrine of the Gospel, but agreeable thereunto, furthering and beautifying the same not a little." [3] It is clear that Cranmer is simply defending the practice of his own Communion, and by no means attacking that of his continental friends.

This continued to be the attitude of the English divines at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. Many of them had taken refuge on the continent while Mary ruled in England, and numbers of continental Protestants came back with them on their return. The crypt of the cathedral at Canterbury has from that

[1] R. G. Usher, *The Reconstruction of the English Church*, Vol. I., p. 69.
[2] Zurich Lett., 1st ser., No. 43, p. 100 and App. 59.
[3] The XXXVIth Article of 1553.

time to this been reserved for the use of a congregation of non-episcopalian French Protestants, and the Archbishop of Canterbury is still their *ex officio* superintendent.

The English opinion is thus summed up in the *Admonition to the People of England* by Thomas Cooper, Bishop of Winchester, in 1589: "Surely as grave learned men as most that have written in this time . . . do make good proof of this proposition, That one form of Church government is not necessary in all times and places of the Church. . . . All these Churches [*i.e.* the non-episcopal Churches of the continent] in which the Gospel in these days, after great darkness, was first renewed, and the learned men whom God sent to instruct them, I doubt not but have been directed by the Spirit of God to retain this liberty, that in external government and other outward orders, they might choose such as they thought in wisdom and godliness to be most convenient for the state of their country and disposition of the people. . . ." "The reason that moveth us not to like of this platform of government," Cooper goes on to say, is that we do not consider it suitable to "the state of our country, people and commonwealth." [1]

Curiously enough, the first English divines to maintain that there was one particular form of Church government prescribed by divine ordinance and set forth in Holy Scripture were Cartwright, Travers and their friends, who made that claim on behalf of Presbyterianism.[2] John Whitgift, in earlier days Cartwright's opponent at Cambridge, became Archbishop of Canter-

[1] Ed. 1589, pp. 74 ff.
[2] *E.g.* in *The Book of Discipline*, 1580.

bury in 1583, and his reply to this claim may be summed up in his own words: "I find no one certain and perfect kind of government prescribed or commanded in the Scriptures to the Church of Christ, which no doubt should have been done, if it had been a matter necessary unto the salvation of the Church. . . . So that, notwithstanding government, or some kind of government, may be a part of the Church, touching the outward form and perfection of it, yet is it not such a part of the essence and being, but that it may be the Church of Christ without this or that kind of government; and, therefore, the 'kind of government' of the Church is not 'necessary unto Salvation."[1] This answer of Whitgift's was subsequently reviewed and approved by Archbishop Parker.[2]

Cartwright and Travers and their party were bent on actually replacing the episcopal by the presbyterian system in the Church of England. They began to establish presbyteries up and down the country, and hoped eventually to oust episcopacy altogether (at all events in its traditional form). On one principle they agreed with their opponents, viz. the principle of one country, one Church; and they recognised that they were struggling for the possession of the Church of England. Thus the bishops were thrown into conflict with them; and so were the thinkers and the statesmen who were content with "the Elizabethan settlement" and impatient of further disturbances. Moreover, the actual working of the presbyteries, as it was unearthed particularly by Richard Bancroft

[1] *Defence of the Answer to the Admonition* (1574), *Works* (Parker Society). Vol. I. pp. 184, 185; cf. Vol. I. p. 6; Vol. III. pp. 194, 214; also Vol. I. pp. 368, 369, 428.

[2] C. S. Carter, *The Anglican Via Media*, p. 89.

(later Bishop of London, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), did not inspire confidence.

But while the authorities strove to secure uniformity with regard to ordination in England, they by no means questioned the validity of the orders of the reformers overseas.[1] It is important, therefore, to observe that the authorities who "settled" the Church of England—and the Church still rests on the Elizabeth "settlement"—freely recognised the validity of the orders of their continental allies, non-episcopal though they were. *And this recognition has never been withdrawn.*

In accordance with a "construction not uncommonly put" (the words are John Keble's [2]) upon a statute of the thirteenth year of Elizabeth's reign, "nearly up to the time when Hooker wrote (1594), numbers had been admitted to the ministry of the Church, with no better than Presbyterian ordination." Probably the numbers were small.[3] The most famous cases are those of William Whittingham, one of the elders appointed in the English Presbyterian Church at Geneva, who became Dean of Durham (1563–1577); John Morison, ordained by the general synod of the county of Lothian, and described in a licence granted to him to exercise his ministry [4] in the province

[1] Lord Bacon strongly objected to any disparagement of the Protestant ministries of the continent; cf. *An Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England. Letters and Life*, ed. J. Spedding, 1868, Vol. I. pp. 85, 87; cf. also Vol. III. p. 107.
Lord Burleigh's attitude was very similar; cf. Strype, *Annals*, Vol. III. p. 323, Appendix XIII.

[2] In his preface to Hooker's *Works*, p. lxxvi.

[3] Cf. Whitgift: "I know none such: and yet their case is far differing from his (*i.e.* Travers')," Strype, *Whitgift*, Vol. III. No. XXX. p. 108.

[4] "In any convenient places, in and throughout the whole

of Canterbury by the vicar-general of Archbishop Grindal, as "ordained to sacred orders and the Holy Ministry": and the incumbents of the parishes in the Channel Islands. "The Bishop of Winchester, not formally renounced, but in all spiritual matters practically repudiated and simply titular, existed for the twenty or thirty island parishes merely to confer through the ceremony of institution, a legal title to their livings on ministers selected, appointed, ordained, in presbyterian assemblies." [1] Such cases were, no doubt, exceptional; as, especially in view of the plots and plans of the "Cartwright party," the bishops became more and more convinced of the need for securing the episcopal settlement of the English Church. Reacting from the "underground" Presbyterianism which they saw creeping into the Church, and gradually losing touch a little with the reformed Churches of the continent, they tended no longer to regard the question of Church government as quite open in the sense admitted by Cranmer and Whitgift, Cooper and Bacon. Episcopal ordination they held to be the regular, normal, form; and any departure from it needed justification. The continental reformers, they admitted, were on various grounds justified in abandoning it: in England there could be no such justification.

This, quite briefly, is the view of the greatest of the Elizabethan theological writers, Richard Hooker (*d.* 1600). Hooker lays down the principle thus:—

province of Canterbury to celebrate divine offices, to minister the Sacraments, etc., as much as in us lies, and we may *de jure*, and as far as the laws of the kingdom do allow." Strype, *Grindal*, Vol. II. p. 271.

[1] C. Hole, *Manual of English Church History*, p. 269; and further Falle, *Jersey*, pp. 193–198; Duncan, *Guernsey*, pp. 333–338.

"The whole Church visible being the true original subject of all power, it hath not ordinarily allowed any other than bishops alone to ordain: howbeit, as the ordinary course is ordinarily in all things to be observed, so it may be in some cases not unnecessary that we decline from the ordinary ways.

"Men may be extraordinarily, yet allowably, two ways admitted into spiritual functions in the Church. One is, when God himself doth of himself raise up any, whose labour he useth without requiring that men should authorize them; but then he doth ratify their calling by manifest signs and tokens himself from heaven. . . .

"Another extraordinary kind of vocation is, when the exigence of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the Church, which otherwise we would willingly keep: where the Church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath nor can have possibly a bishop to ordain; in case of such necessity, the ordinary institution of God hath given oftentimes, and may give, place. And therefore we are not simply without exception to urge a lineal descent of power from the Apostles by continued succession of bishops in every effectual ordination. These cases of inevitable necessity excepted, none may ordain but only bishops; by the imposition of their hands it is, that the Church giveth power of order, both unto presbyters and deacons." [1]

The Seventeenth Century

The view of Hooker remained, generally speaking, the view of the great Caroline divines. It is true that Laud as a young Fellow at Oxford maintained, in his thesis for the degree of B.D., that without bishops

[1] *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book VII. xiv. 11. For Hooker's application of this principle, cf. Book III. xi. 16.

there could be no true Church; but he was severely and publicly rebuked by the then Regius Professor of Divinity (Dr. Holland) as "a seditious person who would unchurch the Reformed Protestant Churches beyond seas, and sow division between us and them, who were brethren, by this novel Popish position." [1] This, however, can hardly have been Laud's intention; for Durel quotes him as saying on a later occasion: "The Ecclesia Anglicana and the other Reformed Churches are sisters dwelling in the same Catholic habitation." [2] Moreover, Laud counted the Lutheran as a kind of episcopalian. "In Sweden," he writes, "they retain both the thing and the name; and the governors of their Churches are, and are called, bishops. And among the other Lutherans the thing is retained, though not the name. For instead of bishops they are called superintendents, and instead of archbishops, general superintendents. And yet even here, too, these names differ more in sound than in sense. For bishop is the same in Greek that superintendent is in Latin. Nor is this change very well liked by the learned. Howsoever, Luther, since he would change the name, did yet very wisely, that he would leave the thing, and make choice of such a name as was not altogether unknown to the ancient Church. For St. Augustine [3] mentions it as plainly and as fully as any of these." [4] "Besides," he says in another passage, "for succession, in the general, I shall say this: It is a great happiness where it may be had 'visible' and 'continued,' and a great conquest over the mutability

[1] Prynne's *Life of Laud*, p. 2.
[2] Durel, *Eccles. Angl. Vindiciae*, p. 355.
[3] *De Civ. Dei*, XIX. 19. [4] *Works*, Vol. III. p. 383.

of this present world. But I do not find any one of the ancient Fathers that makes 'local, personal, visible,' and 'continued succession' a 'necessary sign' or 'mark' of the 'true Church' in any one place. And where Vincentius Lirinensis calls for 'antiquity,' 'universality' and 'consent,' as great notes of truth, he hath not one word of 'succession.'" [1] Again, "Most evident it is, that the 'succession' which the Fathers meant is not tied to place or person, but it is tied to the 'verity of doctrine' . . . so that if the doctrines be no kin to Christ, all the 'succession' become strangers, what nearness soever they pretend." [2]

The four English divines who were sent as representatives to the Synod of Dort (1618), the main object of which was greater union among the Calvinists, were fully conscious of their unity with the Dutch Reformed Church. "We are one body, let us also be of one Spirit," urged Joseph Hall (afterwards Bishop of Norwich), in the course of a "polite and pathetical Latin sermon" which he preached before the Synod.[3]

Of the English theologians of the period in whom the tendency to turn away from the continental reformers and back to the early Fathers was most marked, the two most famous are the bishops Lancelot Andrewes and Jeremy Taylor.

[1] *Works*, Vol. II. p. 422.

[2] *Conference with Fisher the Jesuit. Works*, Vol. II. p. 424.

[3] Hall some years later writes in his *Peacemaker* (1647), "There is no difference in any essential matter betwixt the Church of England and her sisters of the Reformation. . . . The only difference is in the form of outward administration: wherein also we are so far agreed, as that we all profess this form not essential to the being of a Church, though much importing the well or better being of it." But he felt differently towards non-episcopalians at home: "We can at once tenderly respect them and justly censure you." (*Works*, Vol. IX. p. 517.)

The opinion of the former is expressed in a letter to Du Moulin dated December 1618: "Though our government be by Divine Right, it follows not, either that 'there is no salvation' or that 'a Church cannot stand without it.' He must needs be stone blind that sees not Churches standing without it; he must needs be made of iron and hard-hearted that denies them salvation. . . . This is not to damn anything, to prefer a better thing before it: this is not to damn your Church, to recall it to another form, that all antiquity was better pleased with, *i.e.* to ours."

Andrewes, as Bishop of Ely, took part in the consecration of three bishops for Scotland in 1610. One of these Scottish bishops, Spottiswood, tells us that Andrewes raised the question whether they must not first be ordained presbyters "as having received no ordination from a Bishop." "The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Bancroft, who was by, maintained 'That thereof there was no necessity, seeing where Bishops could not be had, the ordination given by the Presbyters must be esteemed lawful; otherwise that it might be doubted if there were any lawful vocation in most of the Reformed Churches.' This applauded to by the other bishops, Ely acquiesced, and at the day and in the place appointed the three Scottish bishops were consecrated." [1]

[1] *History of the Church and State of Scotland*, Book VII. (ed. 1678), p. 514. Such consecration *per saltum* is not now allowable under Roman canon law. According to the theory of orders worked out by Aquinas, supposing the irregularity to have occurred of a baptised man being made bishop without having passed through the lower orders of the ministry, he would still be a valid (though irregular) agent in the passing on of the succession. On the whole subject of consecration *per saltum*, cf. J. W. Hunkin, *Episcopal Ordination and Confirmation in relation to Intercommunion and Reunion*, p. 120.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor in his *Episcopacy Asserted* (1642) would not condemn non-episcopal ordination in cases of necessity, but was not satisfied as to the necessity which was alleged to deprive the continental reformers of episcopacy. "M. Du Plessis," he writes, "a man of honour and great learning, does attest that at the first reformation there were many archbishops and cardinals in Germany, England, France and Italy, that joined in the reformation, whom they might, but did not, employ in their ordinations; and what necessity then can be pretended in this case I would fain learn, that I might take their defence." [1] At the same time he evidently expects the various Protestant Churches of the continent to be in communion both with one another and with the Church of England.[2] But Jeremy Taylor had little or no personal contact with these foreign Protestants, and that probably accounts, at least in part, for the difference in tone between his language and that of another great bishop counted a high churchman in the same period—John Cosin of Durham.

Cosin had himself taken refuge abroad during the Commonwealth, and had much appreciated the friendliness of the reformed Churches. He wrote to Heylin from Charenton near Paris (April 5th, 1658): "I never refused to join with the Protestants, either here or anywhere else, in all things wherein they join with the Church of England. Many of them have been here at our church, and we have been at theirs." [3] As to Cosin's recognition of the orders of their non-

[1] *Works* (ed. Heber and Eden, 1853), Vol. V. p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 601 ff.
[3] *Works*, Vol. IV. p. 397.

episcopally ordained ministers there is no room for doubt. In a letter to M. Cordel at Blois dated from Paris February 7th, 1650, he says: "If at any time a minister so ordained in these French Churches came to incorporate himself in ours, and to receive a public charge or cure of souls among us in the Church of England (as I have known some of them to have done so of late, and can instance in many other before my time), our Bishops did not re-ordain him before they admitted to his charge, as they would have done if his former ordination here in France had been void. Nor did our laws require more of him, than to declare his public consent to the religion received amongst us, and to subscribe the articles established. And I love not to be herein more wise, or harder than our own Church is." [1] This practice of receiving Protestant ministers into the English Church without re-ordination is attested to by several other writers of the period: Clarendon,[2] Bishop Hall,[3] Bishop Fleetwood [4] and Bishop Burnet.[5]

Actual known instances are not numerous. The most familiar is probably that of Dr. De Laune, ordained by the Presbytery at Leyden, admitted into an English benefice "without any new ordination." [6] A less familiar case is that of Cæsar Calander or Calandrin, who was incumbent of Stapleford-Abbots in Essex from June 26th, 1620 to 1640. The follow-

[1] *Works*, Vol. IV. p. 403.
[2] *Continuation of the Life* (ed. 1759), p. 152.
[3] *Defence of the Humble Remonstrance*, § XIV.
[4] *Works*, p. 552.
[5] *History of his own Time* (ed. 1838), p. 125.
[6] *Life of Archbishop Tillotson* (ed. 1752), pp. 185, 186. Tillotson gives an interesting account of De Laune's interview with Bishop Overall.

ing is the gist of a letter written by Thomas Morton, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, to the notorious Antony de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalato, at that time Dean of Windsor and Master of the Savoy, dated Thursday, June 29th, 1620:—

> "In behalf of Cæsar Calander I would gladly comply with your letter, but he has handed me the form of his admission into Holy Orders, which appears to me to be satisfactory; and I do not wish to deprive the pastors, who admitted him, of the powers of ordination, as this would give very serious offence to the foreign Churches. The fear of other people, that by the laws of the realm he might enjoy some rectory, unless our ancient rule be observed, is of no importance, as it is a fact, which is also inserted in the same form of admission, that the custom of the aforesaid Churches is approved by royal authority. I thought it necessary to tell you this, and wish to know what would appear advisable to you. If, however, you think that he ought to be ordained in the English Church, I should like to have this caution expressed in the Episcopal documents: 'Since it does not appear to us sufficiently clear, from the public documents, that he was admitted into Holy Orders.'" [1]

As to other ministers from the Protestant Churches of the continent who were actually made deacons and priests according to the form prescribed in the English Book of Common Prayer, Bishop Hall writes as follows: "The sticking at the admission of our brethren returned from Reformed Churches was not in the case of ordination, but of institution; they had been

[1] Hessel, *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae Archivum*, Vol. I. p. 363. (I owe the reference to the kindness of Dr. Claude Jenkins.)

acknowledged ministers of Christ without any other hands laid upon them; but according to the laws of our land they were not, perhaps, capable of institution to a benefice unless they were so qualified as the statutes of this realm do require." [1] The bishop's explanation is clearly illustrated in the account we have of a visitation of Bramhall, Archbishop of Armagh. The archbishop himself set great store by the historic episcopate. "Whosoever doth willingly break the line of Apostolical succession," he says, "which is the very nerves and sinews of ecclesiastical unity and communion both with the present Church and with the Catholic symbolical Church of all successive ages, he is a schismatic." [2] "As for our parts we believe episcopacy to be at least an apostolic institution, approved by Christ Himself in the Revelation,[3] ordained in the infancy of Christianity as a remedy against schism; and we bless God we have a clear succession of it." [4] The views of the archbishop make his actual practice all the more striking. When he called for the letters of orders of his clergy, and some could produce only certificates of ordination by some Presbyterian classes, he told them that these certificates did not qualify them for any preferment in the Church. "I dispute not," said he, "the value of your ordination, nor those acts you have exercised by virtue of it; what you are, or might be, here when there was

[1] *Loc. cit.*

[2] *Works*, Vol. I. p. 112. But the Archbishop does not unchurch the Lutheran churches of Germany, *ibid.*, Vol. III. pp. 516–518; cf. p. 476.

[3] Bramhall interprets "the angels of the seven churches" (Rev. i. 20) as the bishops of the seven churches. This interpretation, once very common, is now generally abandoned.

[4] *Works*, Vol. I. p. 271.

no law, or in other Churches abroad. But we are now to consider ourselves as a national Church limited by law, which among other things takes chief care to prescribe about ordination; and I do not know how you could recover the means of the Church, if any should refuse to pay you your tithes, if you are not ordained as the law of this Church requireth; and I am desirous that she may have your labours, and you such portions of your revenue as shall be allotted you, in a legal and assured way." "By this means," his editor remarks, "he gained such as were learned and sober." [1]

After the Restoration of 1660 the gap in feeling between moderate Nonconformists and a powerful party in the National Church was so slight [2] that a series of efforts was made towards "comprehension." They were strongly supported by such men as Sir Matthew Hale, John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester (one of the principal founders of the Royal Society), Archbishop Tillotson and Archbishop Sancroft; high churchmen like Bishops Ken, Lake and Beveridge also favoured the movement. A paper in Tillotson's hand dated September 13th, 1689, details concessions "which will probably be made by the Church of England":

[1] *Works*, Vol. I. p. xxiv. Several suggestions for a "moderate episcopacy" which should be acceptable to all parties were put forward. The most noteworthy are those of Professor John Forbes and Archbishop Usher; cf. Forbes' *Irenicum* (1629), Book II. xi. Prop. 13, Pt. i. (see Selwyn's scholarly edition of the *First Book of the Irenicum of John Forbes of Corse*); cf. Usher's *Reduction of Episcopacy unto the form of Synodical Government in the ancient Church* (1658), and his *Due Way of Composing Differences* (1660), p. 63; cf. *Works*, Vol. I. pp. 604–607; also R. Parr's *Life of Usher*, p. 5, Appendix.

[2] Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 385, 386.

"No. 5. That for the future those who have been ordained in any of the foreign reformed Churches be not required to be reordained here to render them capable of preferment in this Church."

"No. 6. That for the future none be capable of any ecclesiastical benefice or preferment in the Church of England that shall be ordained in England otherwise than by bishops. And that those who have been ordained only by presbyters shall not be compelled to renounce their former ordination. But because many have, and do still doubt, of the validity of such ordination where episcopal ordination may be had and is by law required, it shall be sufficient for such persons to receive ordination from a bishop in this or the like form: *If thou art not already ordained, I ordain thee*, etc., as, in case a doubt be made of any one's baptism it is appointed by the liturgy that he be baptised in this form, *If thou are not baptised, I baptise thee*, etc." [1]

Most of the Presbyterians wished for comprehension—Philip Henry, Richard Baxter, Bates, Howe, and others—but the Independents and the Baptists were against it. The House of Commons, too, reacting violently from the Commonwealth regime, was strongly opposed to it.

On the whole the attitude of the bishops themselves was distinctly stiffer than at the beginning of the century. When in 1661 four bishops were to be consecrated for Scotland, and two of the persons chosen, Sharp and Leighton, were found not to have been priested, the English bishops were unwilling to follow the precedent of 1610 and to consecrate *per saltum*.

[1] *Life*, p. 169.

Leighton was by far the best of the four, and he, Bishop Burnet tells us, "did not stand much upon it. He did not think orders given without bishops were null and void. He thought the forms of government were not settled by such positive laws as were unalterable, but only by apostolical practices, which, as he thought, authorised episcopacy as the best form. Yet he did not think it necessary to the being of a Church. But he thought that every Church might make such rules of ordination as they pleased, and that they might re-ordain all that came to them from any other Church, and that the re-ordaining a priest ordained in another Church imported no more but that they received him into orders according to their rules,[1] and did not infer the annulling the orders he had formerly received." [2] Moreover when the four new bishops, on their return to Scotland, consecrated others, they did so, in certain cases, *per saltum*.[3] Of Leighton himself we are told that "he drew many to a kindness for episcopacy by his exemplary life, rather than debates." The whole controversy was distasteful to him, and in 1674 he finally retired to Sussex, there to await those "shadows of the evening" for

[1] The French Presbyterians apparently practised re-ordination of some kind. Thus, according to Whitgift, "the French Churches practise otherwise, neither will they admit any of our ministers ordained according to the laws of this Church, to exercise his function among them without a new kind of calling according to their platform" (Strype, *Whitgift*, Vol. III. p. 182). A similar statement is made by Jeremy Taylor (*Works*, Vol. V. p. 119), and Bingham (*Works*, Vol. IX. p. 297).

[2] Burnet, *Own Time*, Vol. I. pp. 139 ff.

[3] And, further, they made little attempt to impose episcopal ordination upon the existing Scottish clergy. See T. Hannan, "The Scottish Consecrations in London," *Church Quarterly Review*, January 1911, p. 411.

which he longed, when there would be rest "from all these poor childish trifling contests." [1]

We must not leave the seventeenth century without reference to Archbishop Sancroft's "very tender regard to our brethren the Protestant dissenters." In his admonition to his clergy (1689) he exhorted them to take all opportunities of assuring and convincing these nonconforming brethren "that the bishops of this Church are really and sincerely irreconcileable enemies to the errors . . . of the Church of Rome,[2] and that the very unkind jealousies which some have had of us to the contrary were altogether groundless. And, in the last place, that they warmly and most affectionately exhort them to join with us in daily fervent prayer to the God of peace for the universal blessed union of all reformed Churches both at home and abroad against our common enemies, that all they who do confess the holy name of our dear Lord, and do agree in the truth of His holy word, may also meet in one holy communion, and live in perfect unity and godly love." [3]

"All reformed Churches both at home and abroad"—this is perhaps the first time a "high church" bishop in an official utterance ever used the word "Church" of nonconformist societies here in England.

[1] A. J. Mason, *The Church of England and Episcopacy*, p. 276.

[2] Cf. Bishop Hacket's words at the re-dedication of his cathedral at Lichfield, which had been restored through his efforts and partly at his own expense (1669): "Let the true Protestant Religion be celebrated in it as long as the sun and moon endure."

[3] *Life*, p. 196.

The Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century will not detain us long. There were a few like William Law, who spoke of "an absolute necessity of a strict succession of authorised ordainers from the apostolical times in order to constitute a Christian priest." [1] But Law is here speaking in the abstract, and in any case he and his friends were a very small minority in the Church of England. The opinion of the overwhelming majority of English divines is expressed by Archbishop William Wake (1716–1737), whom Dr. Mason calls "one of the greatest prelates who have occupied the throne of St. Augustine and of Cranmer." [2] "The Reformed Churches," Wake writes (1719), "though differing in some points from our English Church, I willingly embrace. I could have wished, indeed, that the Episcopal form of government had been retained by all of them. . . . Meanwhile far be it from me that I should be so iron-hearted as to believe that, on account of such a defect (let me be permitted without offence to call it such), any of them ought to be cut off from our communion, or with certain mad writers among us, to declare that they have no true and valid sacraments, and thus are scarcely Christians." [3]

The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (founded in 1698) was at work in India through-

[1] *Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor* (1717), Westminster Lib. Reprint, p. 102.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 345.

[3] Quoted W. Goode, *Brotherly Communion with the Foreign Protestant Churches desired and cultivated by the highest and best of the Divines of the Church of England*, p. 32; cf. also Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History* (ed. 1845), Vol. IV. p. 378, n.

out the century, and for nearly the whole of that time a body of Lutheran clergy were supported by the society and by the East India Company, which employed many of them as chaplains. One of these Lutherans, Schwartz, became one of the most famous of all missionaries in the history of the Indian Church, and the Fort Church at Madras remains as a monument erected to his memory by the East India Company. Another well-known name is that of Satyanadhan, an Indian ordained by the rite of the Lutheran Church with the cordial sanction of the S.P.C.K. The society thus refers to the ordination in its report: "If we wish to establish the Gospel in India, we ought in time to give the natives a Church of their own, independent of our support . . . and secure a regular succession of truly apostolical pastors, even if all communication with their parent Church should be annihilated."

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (founded in 1701) likewise for many years sent out as its missionaries a number of ministers in Lutheran orders; as did also the Church Missionary Society, founded in 1799.

Throughout the century, moreover, the English Church encouraged and helped the *Unitas Fratrum* or Moravians. Their Church had been expressly recognised as an episcopal Church by many of the seventeenth-century divines.[1] Archbishop Wake in 1717 expressed himself satisfied with the report he had received of their orders; and so did the next Arch-

[1] *E.g.* by Ferne, Bramhall and Saywell. Thorndike is more guarded: he has a warm regard for them, but whether the succession of their bishops is a true succession or not he declines to pronounce (*Works*, Vol. V. p. 62).

bishop of Canterbury, John Potter (1737–1747). In 1749 Wilson, the great and good Bishop of Sodor and Man, accepted an invitation from the Moravian synod in London to become their superintendent.[1]

Bishop Wilson, it may be added, made it his custom to pray for a blessing on " all the Reformed Churches " in a bidding prayer which he used before his sermons.

One of the most influential theologians of the century was William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester (1759–1779). The following is a short quotation from his works: " Church-Government in general . . . I own that this is *necessary to preserve a religious society* in the state and condition of a society. But then, give me leave to say, it does not follow from thence, that the *order and constitution of such a society must be invariable too*. Because Church-government may be administered by an Episcopacy, a Presbytery, or an Independency.[2] . . . The specific form of Church-government amongst Christians was not prescribed, and therefore none seems intended to be invariably followed, because Jesus did not unite His religion to the State, but left it to particular Churches to follow such as were most agreeable to the form of those Civil Societies in which

[1] See, further, G. A. Wauer, *The Beginnings of the Brethren's Church in England* (1901); and W. N. Schwarze, " The Moravian Church and the Proposals of the Lambeth Conference " (*Church Quarterly Review*, October 1909). It comes as something of a shock to find the Lambeth Conference of 1920 recommending that no further steps towards union with the Moravians should be taken at present. This decision is said to be due to the Moravian practice of administering Confirmation and Holy Communion by deacons.

[2] Cf. the acute comments on Article XXXVI. by John Hey (Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, 1780–1795, another eminent theologian of the period), *Works* (2nd ed., 1822), Vol. IV. pp. 470 ff.

they were to be established." [1] Sir George Pretyman Tomline, Senior Wrangler at Cambridge in 1772, tutor and lifelong friend of the younger Pitt, Bishop of Winchester (1820–1827), and reputed to be a high churchman, writes in an exactly similar strain.[2]

We may sum up so far in the words of Dean Goode: "It is quite clear, that the original doctrine of the Church of England, the principles upon which our Church was founded, and the opinions of nine-tenths of her great divines, are all in favour of the cultivation of a spirit of brotherly communion between that Church and the foreign Protestant non-Episcopal Churches." [3]

The Nineteenth Century

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the actual points of contact between the English Church and the continental Protestants were comparatively few. The question of relations with them came up from time to time, as, for instance, in 1841, over the formation of an Anglican bishopric in Jerusalem; and again when Sumner was Archbishop of Canterbury. Frederick William IV. of Prussia, who first proposed the Jerusalem bishopric, definitely hoped that it would lead to a closer alliance between the Church of England and the Lutheran Church. The bishop was to be not only an Anglican bishop, but at the same time chief pastor over the Prussian ministers in the East. Dr. Pusey complained that "for the first time the Church of England was holding communion with those outside the Church"—a complaint

[1] *Works*, VII. p. 368.
[2] *Exposition of Articles* (ed. 1799), pp. 396–398 (Article XXIII).
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

which seems to show that the learned doctor had somewhat neglected the study of English Church history. High churchmen in general were rather opposed to the scheme. Dean Hook, however, then Vicar of Leeds, and Mr. Gladstone were in favour of it; and among those who consecrated the first bishop, Michael Solomon Alexander, on November 7th, 1841, was Bishop Selwyn, whose own consecration had taken place only three weeks previously.

Ten years later strong exception was taken by a number of high churchmen, headed by Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, to a statement made by Archbishop Sumner in reply to a question asked him as to whether the Church of England recognised the orders of foreign Protestant clergymen. The archbishop had replied: "I hardly imagine that there are two bishops on the bench, or one clergyman in fifty, throughout our Church, who will deny the validity of the orders of these clergy, solely on account of their wanting the imposition of episcopal hands." Perhaps the archbishop had rather under-estimated the strength of the Tractarians; but there can be little doubt that he was expressing the general opinion of the rest of the English clergy.

A much more urgent question, however, was the question of the relation between the Church of England and the non-episcopal ministries in her own land. On this question Frederick Temple when Bishop of Exeter made a pronouncement at an ordination in St. Mary's Church, Truro (Trinity Sunday, 1871). "He for his part, he said, had no hesitation at all in saying that he looked upon the ministers of every denomination in this country as true ministers of

Christ. He knew no test by which their work could be tried which would not come to that result, because he saw that men under their ministry had accepted God's truth; and when he saw that the Lord, Master of them all, had so blessed their work, he could not doubt for one moment that their work had His approval, and that He had sent them. But still their mission was partial. Their mission was limited by the particular form of truth which they had to teach. But the Church had a larger and fuller mission. . . ." [1] Years earlier, in a letter addressed to J. D. Coleridge, and dated July 27th, 1849, Temple had written: "I am glad, heartily glad, we have the Apostolical succession. It makes up the total of those attractions which bind us to the Church. . . . But that this, and this alone, makes such a difference that the Anglican rests on the 'sure promise,' while the Presbyterian is left to the 'uncovenanted mercies,' is what I cannot either believe or teach." [2]

Bishop Temple is generally regarded as something of a broad churchman. The opinions of very few broad churchmen have yet been quoted in this essay, and some of them, on general grounds, are important. For one thing, it is becoming clear that on this particular point their opinions are the opinions of the generality of English church-people, apart from Anglo-Catholics. Here we must be content with two.

The first is that of Dr. Arnold of Rugby, expressed in a letter to Dr. Hawkins dated April 14th, 1834:—

> "To insist on the necessity of Episcopacy is exactly like insisting on the necessity of circum-

[1] *Life*, Vol. I. p. 387. [2] *Ibid.*, II. p. 566.

cision; both are and were lawful, but to insist on either as *necessary*, is unchristian, and binding the Church with a yoke of carnal ordinances; and the reason why circumcision, although expressly commanded once, was declared not binding upon Christians, is much stronger against the binding nature of Episcopacy, which never was commanded at all; the reason being, that all forms of government and ritual are in the Christian Church indifferent, and to be decided by the Church itself, *pro temporum et locorum ratione*, 'the Church' not being the clergy, but the congregation of Christians. . . . By the way, I never accused Keble or Newman of saying that to belong to the true Church would save a bad man! but of what is equally unchristian, that a good man was not safe unless he belonged to an Episcopal Church; which is exactly not allowing God's seal, without it be countersigned by one of their own forging." [1]

The second opinion to be quoted here is that of John Percival, the distinguished Bishop of Hereford (1895–1918). In a letter to his *Diocesan Messenger* in 1911 the following passage occurs:—

"Those of us who were taught the traditional doctrine of Apostolical Succession naturally feel that episcopacy is essential to the Church of Christ, and communion with non-episcopal Christians is consequently difficult to accept; but as it is now almost universally recognised that, whilst episcopacy (to use the language of theologians) is of the *bene esse*, it is not of the *esse* of the Church—in other words, that, good and valuable as history has proved it and as we believe it to be, it is not an essential and indispensable part of the Church's

[1] *Life*, pp. 327, 328.

> organization—there is in fact no sufficient reason why episcopal and non-episcopal Christians, holding the same creeds, and believing in the same sacraments, should not kneel together at the Lord's Table." [1]

It may be doubted whether anyone worked harder in exploring practicable approaches to reunion during the latter half of the nineteenth century than Charles Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrew's. Especially from 1880 to 1893 it was his constant endeavour to promote unity between the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches of Scotland. In *The Case of Non-Episcopal Ordination* he examines the sense in which the English divines had used the word "necessity" in allowing that "necessity" excused the lack of episcopacy among the continental Protestants. "It appears that those great divines," [2] he says, "did not speak of necessity as bearing upon the question in any strict narrow sense. They would admit a quasi-necessity, not, indeed, as permanent, but as temporary, arising out of long-standing associations or inherited circumstances." The practical policy finally advocated by the Bishop is outlined in an article on "Union or Separation" in the *Scottish Church Review* (May 1884):—[3]

> "Can a reconciliation between Presbyterians and ourselves be effected upon the understanding that the adoption of the three-fold ministry is eventually to be accepted as the basis of our agree-

[1] *Life*, pp. 316, 317; cf. p. 324, which quotes a letter to the bishop from Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey, editor of the *Spectator*, thanking him for his statement about episcopacy.

[2] He is referring to Hooker, Field, Andrewes, Cosin and Wake (pp. 9–10).

[3] Afterwards published as a pamphlet.

ment—the existing generation of Presbyterian clergy being left free to receive Episcopal ordination or not, at their own option; and that in the meantime we are to work together with mutual respect, and with no unkind or unbrotherly disparagement of each other's position." [1]

The Twentieth Century

This essay must be brought to a close; but room must be found for four more opinions each in its own way representative and important.

The first is an opinion expressed by Dr. Hensley Henson, then Canon of Westminster, after the Lambeth Conference of 1908:—

> "On its merits, the historic Episcopate might win ultimately universal acceptance; on its Divine rights it is *me judice* an obstacle to the union of Christians, and indefensible. The urgent matter for us is to get our own position right: then we can approach others with a good conscience. I do not think we are morally competent to discuss reunion while we openly or implicitly advance a claim which cannot be really sustained.
>
> "Why should not Episcopacy have in our system a position analogous to that held by Confirmation? We value and insist upon it as a domestic rule; we do not exalt it as a universally obligatory practice." [2]

The second comes from the "highest" section of high churchmen—from no less a champion of Anglo-Catholicism than Dr. Frank Weston, Bishop of Zanzi-

[1] Quoted in J. Wordsworth, *Episcopate of Charles Wordsworth*, p. 237.

[2] *Reunion and Intercommunion* (1909), Preface.

bar, well known for his violent attack on Bishop Percival. The following passage occurs in his *Life* by Canon Maynard Smith:—

> "He recognised also that if reunion were to take place, there would have to be a time when many anomalies and some irregularities would have to be winked at. He made great friends with the Bishop of Tinnevelly (now Madras), who had belonged to the C.M.S., and with the Indian Bishop of Dornakal. With the latter he had long confabulations at night, and ultimately agreed to his proposals, provided that the Lambeth Conference did not formally sanction what was irregular, and that satisfactory guarantees were given for the future. He told Bishop Azariah 'If you are one of the Bishops of the South India United Church, I shall be entirely satisfied.'" [1]

The third expression of opinion is taken from Archbishop Randall Davidson's judgment on the Kikuyu controversy, published at Easter 1915:—

> "The threefold ministry comes down to us from Apostolic times, and we reverently maintain it as an essential element in our own historic system and as a part of our Church's witness to 'the Laws of ecclesiastical polity.' . . . But to maintain that witness with all steadfastness is not the same thing as to place of necessity *extra ecclesiam* every system and every body of men who follow a different line, however careful, strict and orderly their plan. . . . No student of the question of our relation to other parts of the Church of Christ will forget that in almost every utterance which the Church of England has made on the subject —either corporately or by its representative men—emphasis is laid on the distinction between

[1] *Life*, p. 230.

> 'regular' and 'irregular' ordination, and this without any attempt to lay down limits as to the operation of the grace of God vouchsafed to those who minister his Gospel to the souls of men." [1]

The last quotation will fittingly bring this long catena to an end. It is taken from the *Wayside Sketches in Ecclesiastical History* of that judicious scholar, Dr. C. Bigg:—

> "If there is one thing absolutely certain, it is this, that there will be no reunion of Christendom until every man is left in undisturbed possession of that liberty which the New Testament guarantees to him. There will be different ideas as to what that liberty comprises, but it is certainly very wide, and in doubtful cases the presumption is always in favour of freedom, not against it. Because though freedom is not a good thing in itself and absolutely, it is yet the indispensable condition of all human excellence." [2]

* * * * * *

The Church of England must now no longer halt between two opinions. In the sixteenth century she recognised that the Protestant communities on the continent were true branches of Christ's Church, with

[1] *Kikuyu*, pp. 18, 19. On the words "regular" and "irregular" the Archbishop has a footnote: "I purposely avoid the words 'valid' and 'invalid,' as I have always found myself unable, without a feeling of intolerable presumption, to give to that phrase the meaning which in popular parlance it would seem to carry. The word 'invalid' has, except when applied to physical health, drifted far from the original force of the Latin adjective."

Cf. A. E. J. Rawlinson in *Foundations* (1913): "The ministries of the various Protestant denominations may quite legitimately point to the witness of the souls they shepherd, and with St. Paul exclaim, 'The seal of our apostleship are ye in the Lord;' and it were well if the further bandying of epithets like 'valid' and 'invalid' could be abandoned by consent, as the *damnosa hereditas* of an age of legal metaphors and embittered controversy" (p. 386).

[2] P. 179.

true ministries of their own. She admitted that their circumstances were such that they had to organise their own form of Church government, and acknowledged that their ministries satisfied the first of Hooker's tests—God had "ratified their calling by manifest signs and tokens himself from heaven."

This recognition has never been withdrawn.

And now it is abundantly clear that the Free Churches in this country, which have long enjoyed legal status and public recognition, are practically in the same position as the continental Protestants. The original responsibility for the separations from the English Church which occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is to be shared between the Anglicans, who certainly lacked sympathy and understanding, and the Nonconformists, who may have acted with some degree of impatience. In any case, as to the ministries of the latter it is clear that God has ratified "their calling by manifest signs and tokens himself from heaven."

Let the acknowledgment that the Free Churches are true branches of Christ's Church, with true ministries of their own, be frank and explicit.[1] We can then together go on to explore what is desirable for all ministers, both Anglican and Free Church, in the way of a fuller authorisation which will cover the wider ground of the Church Catholic of the future for which we hope and pray.

[1] Cf. Dr. Headlam, *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion*, p. 291: "I would suggest, then, that as the act of reunion we should solemnly and formally recognise one another's Orders as valid and give them authority for our own Church. . . . Our Orders have all been imperfect; they have none of them been really Catholic, because they have been the Orders of a divided Church."

X

THE REUNION OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES

By The Rev. J. Paul S. R. Gibson, Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

Two words in the title throw out their challenge—"Reunion" and "Reformed." Both words are referred to Churches, so that we shall be driven to consider the problem from the community standpoint. This is necessary, but not ideal, for the reunion of groups must be somewhat artificial and come as the result of compromise. The deepest, truest union (I do not say reunion, for no separation has ever taken place among them) is only to be found in the last resort among those of all races and Churches who, whatever be their trappings, are one in Christ Jesus, and in Him alone. Souls thus united are the true Church of God. Birth and country make them work in this or that branch of the Church, education and upbringing make them clothe their experience with this or that form of dogma, but deep calls unto deep, the Christ in one is the Christ in the other. The two are gathered together, and Christ is in the midst.

These are the things of the spirit, these are the things that really matter. To them we shall return in mind and experience when the clashing of Churches and discordancies of dogmas, forced upon us by the necessity of this world's limitations, drive us almost to despair.

And, returning, we shall find rest unto our souls and fresh courage for facing the actual problems of Church reunion which confront us.

Reformed Churches

By the Reformed Churches are meant the Churches which at the time of the Reformation carried forward the light which the Holy Spirit had gradually been revealing to the Church, and which certain branches of it refused to recognise. This truth needs stating to-day, when from various quarters it is alleged that the reformed Churches broke away or separated themselves from the one and only Church. In so doing it is urged that they fell from grace, became schismatic and can only rejoin the true Church by submitting to its dogma and administration.

There is no need to stint one's praise for all the battles that the undivided, or even the divided Eastern and Western Churches won against infidel and unbeliever, nor to ignore the fact that they kept alight a flame of civilisation and righteousness in an age called dark. But praise does not exclude criticism, nor does the contribution of light eliminate the possibility of failing to recognise a greater light when it arises. The Spirit of God was moving over the waters of the mind of man. "The Crusades changed the shape of society and broke down feudalism." [1] The age of centralised and absolute authority was passing away, and what was being rejected in the State could not be accepted in the Church. The position of the Pope came under critical examination no less than that of kings. The deistic conception of God as far remote was com-

[1] Cf. *The Continuity of Christian Thought* (Allen), p. 244.

patible with a whole hierarchical system through whom the grace of God was conveyed to men. The recognition of God as immanent both in nature and in the individual soul made men see that the priesthood, however useful, was not an essential element of Christianity. The "no bishop, no Church" of Cyprian was replaced by "Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst," of our Lord. The visible Church was taking its proper place as the instrument and symbol of the invisible. The ministry of the Word in preaching, which except in the Eastern Church had been sadly neglected, began to rank with the ministry of grace in Sacraments. The Bible thus became once again the great teacher not only of clerics, but also of the laity, and freedom claimed that it should speak direct to the soul, and not be officially interpreted by a Church appointed to teach with the Bible to prove.

The old position is well summed up by Charles Beard: [1] "The believer found himself separated from God by a thousand barriers which he could not overleap, and which drew his attention on themselves as the proper objects of religious desire. For all good he was the suppliant of the Church. She led him, she fed him, she imposed her own laws upon him, she rewarded him upon her own terms. He accepted her word for everything. She was the perpetual, the all-powerful mediator between earth and heaven. Without her there was no access to God, no spiritual life now, no salvation hereafter." Authority, mediation, mechanism were being supplanted by freedom, direct boldness of access, and by personal relationship. Penitence was replacing penance. The appreciation of the value of

[1] Cf. *The Reformation*, p. 116.

personality was, by the guidance of God, emerging out of the earlier autocratic conceptions of life. With mighty pangs a new democracy was being born. The attempt to model the religious world on the pattern of ant or bee administration was proving as much a blind alley of development in the spiritual as in the natural sphere. The spirit of Christ, as He had promised, was making them free. Wycliffe, Huss and Savonarola were amongst the first to express the new life. The first stages of this emancipation had already been seen in the earlier rise of monasticism, with its semi-independence, and still more in the various schools of Christian mystics, such as Eckhart and Tauler, who had found the truth of personal union with the Master independently of ecclesiasticism, though some had remained under its nominal sway.

When therefore the sixteenth century came, its events did not constitute any break with the past. "Luther was but the child of the ages preceding; the Protestant revolution was the natural and orderly sequence of a long course of preparation." [1] He continued the true advance of the spirit which giveth life, and left behind those bound to the forms and letter that killeth. As the derivation of the word pro-testant reminds us, he witnessed for the emerging truth more than he attacked the now receding error, though perforce the former vocation necessitated the latter. The abuses which had arisen in the Roman Church were the accident that led to the forward move. I have not stressed them, because, though terribly real, they were not the deep cause of the Reformation To the men of the day they may have appeared as a cause, but as

[1] Cf. *The Continuity of Christian Thought* (Allen), p. 271.

we look back over the centuries we can place them in their proper position. The slowly emerging truth, and nothing else, will account for the movement, for there is nothing so irresistible as truth when the time is ripe for it to take possession of the public mind. The hour had come, and the problem was not whether truth would prevail, but whether the old Church would rise to its opportunity, or let others be the prophets and messengers of the reinterpreted Gospel. Professor Whitehead has somewhere said that knowledge is like fish, it will not keep. No more will any deposit of truth that it not in constant touch with the revivifying Spirit of God.

The sixteenth-century reformers did not possess the whole truth, but they were in the line of the truth being revealed by the Holy Spirit. We of the reformed Churches to-day are their children, and in the direct line of spiritual succession, if we, in our age, bear the same witness to progressively revealed truth and are not bound by, though we may justly use, the means and methods useful in earlier stages for the expression of truth.

The words "reformed Churches" must therefore be taken to mean the Churches which on the whole represent this attitude of mind. Within each so-called reformed Church are individuals who to-day live in the old spirit, and as each generation passes the war has to be waged afresh and the victory won. In the last resort the word "reformed" belongs to individuals. It designates those whose eyes are turned forwards, and not backwards, and who treasure the forms of the past, not as of intrinsic value in themselves, but as the chrysalis from which, after effective use, the new life is

emerging. On the assumption that the reformed Churches have been and are the spiritual home of such souls, we can see that these Churches, with all their national differences, with all their varieties of ecclesiastical organisation,[1] with all their varying interpretations of doctrine, are yet bound by the great bond of a similar outlook. It is on this spiritual basis, and on that alone, that we can now turn to the consideration of the question of their reunion into some more materially homogeneous entity.

Reunion

The reunion of the reformed Churches may be conceived as arising in many ways. They may each for the sake of peace accept the terms of Rome, prove false to their vision, and leave the truth to find new knights to carry her banner in days yet unborn. I do not treat of this further now, as the attitude of Rome and the East will be dealt with later.[2]

Or again, at the other extreme of thought, they may decide to remain as they are in outward form, breaking down only the sense of spiritual separation where it is felt to exist. They would then fully and mutually recognise ministries and members. The brick walls of material separation would still remain, though connecting doors would be built, and, what is more important, the broken glass at times to be found on the top of them would melt away in the blaze of white-hot

[1] In those countries where the bishops favoured the Reformation episcopacy was retained. Where the bishops were reactionary the Church reformed without them. Thus arose the two great divisions of reformed episcopal (England, Sweden) and reformed non-episcopal (Scotland, France, Germany).

[2] See Essay XI. pp. 245–246.

love. Such unity would be real and spiritual, but, alas! to the many outside might seem incomplete. Such unity is needed, but visible signs of its reality are also requisite. Personally I believe that the more organised unity of ministry, membership and administration depends on, and must be preceded by, a spiritual unity. The visible signs of unity would not be slow to follow. In discussing the possible alternatives of visible unity I am under no illusion that these of themselves can create the spirit necessary to their manifestation. With this fact clearly before us let us consider the two main possibilities of federation and organic unity.

For any scheme there are, over and above the unity in the Spirit of Christ, certain prominent questions which will arise, relating to belief or creed, Sacraments, worship and the ministry or government of the church. Agreement in belief will imply an intellectual outlook which in fundamental conceptions is similar. It may and will include many differences of degree or emphasis. Agreement as to the use of special creeds will be far more elastic. They are capable of more than one interpretation, and can therefore be accepted by those holding widely varying views. Each Church interprets the creeds in its own way. Such agreement is therefore comparatively easy to obtain, and Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Free Churchmen all find them capable of adoption.

Agreement as to set forms of worship which has been pressed as a basis by Dr. Headlam would come under the same category.[1] It would supply a uniform framework for varying thoughts. Agreement as to ministry and government may have a narrower or a

[1] Cf. *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion*, pp. 276–278.

wider interpretation. It may demand agreement as to the origin and efficacy of the ministry, such as the Roman Catholic Church requires, or be content, for the sake of historical continuity in form, with the use of the names bishop, priest and deacon for the three functions exercised within the ministry—namely, rulers, officers and assistants. This is the line adopted in the South Indian Union proposals of 1929.

With these points in mind, we can now examine what the terms federation and organic unity imply.

A federation demands as its absolute minimum a mutual agreement, whether written or verbal, that the representative heads of the Churches will be in consultation, either regularly or from time to time, with regard to matters affecting the religious life of the Churches. It would naturally, though not necessarily, mutually accept the members of each branch of the federation, and give them ordinary privileges of membership. One of its first concerns would be the question of the reception or otherwise by another Church within the federation of members excommunicated or disciplined in some way by one of the Churches. The ministries of any of the federating Churches might or might not be mutually recognised. Without standardising the ministries in any way, a common form of mutual commission for service in any Church in the federation would be a further step. The privilege of Communion in any Church would follow as a natural right of membership. The way would thus be paved for more constant fellowship among members, ministers and governing bodies. The regular interchange of opinions, the notification of regulations and proposed alterations, the consultation with regard to united

progressive action, would sooner or later lead to the serious consideration whether a yet closer unity could not be reached.

It will thus be seen that the conditions and effects of federation of Churches cannot be accurately defined. Any agreed mutual and effectual consultation of the leaders constitutes a minimum of federation, and in its developed sense a federation can grow into an organic unity. It is not the machinery or form that is the decisive factor, but whether or not the living and life-giving Spirit is present and operative. We see federations at work all over the world. In South India the Lutheran, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches have been co-operating along these lines for many years. In America we find the beginnings in the mutual consultations between the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Church of Christ, which comprises the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and the Lutherans. Another instance is that of the mutual recognition of ministries and members between the Swedish Church and the Church of England on the one hand, and the German Lutherans on the other, leading to the anomaly that Churches may be federated to the same Church and yet not to each other. A very elementary stage is seen in comity of missions in various non-Christian areas, where the various societies agree to give each other undisturbed fields of activity to prevent overlapping. In an indirect way this has proved an important factor in the larger problems of reunion, as, owing to this policy, whole areas belong to one Church, and when members of other Churches come into the district, the question of the recognition of their membership arises at once. The

National Christian Councils which have been organised in many countries constitute another link in informal federation. Responsible representatives from the various Churches are present, and much ground is cleared, and though the body is not given executive powers, yet certain concerted action among the churches arises in consequence of their findings.

Let us pass on now from this discussion of federation to a consideration of organic unity. Many feel that if the Church is to give its complete witness its unity must be of an organic nature. In its most complete form this will include uniformity of belief as well as creed. It will preclude individual interpretation and pronounce on the views to be held in all matters of faith. Its logical climax is a central and infallible figure, who, in order to vindicate his position, must be the representative of Christ on earth. In him must rest the final power of inclusion in, or exclusion from the whole Church of Christ. Discipline will demand the exercise of the same authority over conduct, and lest even the future world seem left to the free Spirit of God, the control must extend to the life to come. It naturally follows that all administration and finance, as well as forms of worship, must be centrally controlled. Diversity might lead to discrimination, so uniformity is essential. Such a scheme demands an authoritative priesthood which shall unquestioningly and faithfully represent the central authority in the remotest corner of the world. The ministry and its appointment thus become all-important. Its validity cannot rest on anything purely spiritual, but must find its power in a visible historic continuity, which in turn claims its efficacy from a grace conveyed in one way, and one

way only, emanating from Christ Himself, through the channel of His Apostles and those directly commissioned by them, by the laying-on of hands. For those to whom such organic unity is an essential for the existence of the Church the Roman position is the only goal, and once their premises are granted, their conclusions are incontrovertible. But logic has never ruled the world and never will! Many are content with far less as an ideal of organic unity.

Let us now consider the Church of England and those Churches which together form the world-wide Anglican Communion. We have found that uniformity of belief is not attainable, and have ceased to demand it. Instead we pride ourselves on the diversity of opinions which we can admit within an organised whole. We still keep the formal expression of belief within the variously interpreted framework of the Creeds and the Bible. There is a centralised consultative body of bishops called the Lambeth Conference, which meets now every ten years, but this conference has no binding authority on the dioceses throughout the world. Attempts to unify fundamentals or details in the forms of worship have not been rewarded with success.

And yet we regard ourselves as an organic unity, and we are so in form. This rests on the uniformity demanded and maintained since 1662 in the ordination of the ministers of the Church, bishops, priests and deacons. This fact will account for the tremendous importance attached to and prominence given to the whole question of orders in the problems of our Church. Under the circumstances, it is hard to see how those who regard formal organic unity as vital to spiritual unity, and who equate faith

and order, can do otherwise than lose the sense of proportion in matters affecting the Church of Christ. The clamour for organic cohesion may well veil an unuttered fear lest the absence of true spiritual unity be suddenly revealed naked before the whole world. It is only right here to point out that it is by no means proven that it is in fact the bond of episcopal ordination that holds the Church of England together. This is not the place to discuss it, but a good case can be made for State establishment as being the really effective cause. Only time can prove the suggestion.

It is, to say the least, difficult to credit a form so variously interpreted and valued by members within the same Communion as being the cause *par excellence* of a truly remarkable phenomenon. The true unity of a Church must be either inward and spiritual, or outward and formal, and in either case based on a corresponding and generally recognised agreement. There is no such basis of spiritual agreement in our Church. The cohesion must therefore rest on factors which are external and formal. An historic episcopacy accepted by all on the same lines would form an effective basis; but, as all know, there is no common mind on this question, and one is driven to look for another generally accepted authority. The State establishment, with all its consequences of possessions, privileges and prestige, is a sufficient cause, if not the actual one.

The proposed union of Churches in South India which is fully discussed elsewhere in this volume is another attempt to reach the goal of organic unity. The proposals do not demand unity of belief, but only of creed and administration. The good faith of the proposals is evinced by the mutual recognition of

existing ministries, though, for the advantages of historic continuity, the episcopal form of ordination and the threefold ministry are to be adopted in future. We have here the possibilities of a large Church united by the episcopal bond (but with no special interpretation of episcopacy), by due recognition of presbyter and layman, by the framework of the Bible and the Creeds, by a systematised administrative and financial organisation, but freed from the benefits or otherwise of State establishment. If, as is to be hoped, this Church is able to develop a common attitude in matters of belief, even though it be not agreement in interpretation, but the breadth of mind to see the true unity behind apparent differences, then there is every reason to believe that the new venture to be consummated after such prolonged negotiations will be abundantly blessed. We have here an example of episcopacy as a form, with some common appreciation of it, proving a useful means, under existing circumstances, for bringing about a deeper unity. This is the true function of form, and it was in this way that episcopacy arose.

Other attempts have been made towards organic unity. The one in Persia most closely resembles that in South India, as in it the Church of England is directly concerned. In this case the only other Church to be included is the Presbyterian. The basis here also is to be the form of episcopacy without particular interpretation, and the full validity of the existing ministries of the Word and Sacraments is duly recognised by all.

It is no accident that the urge to Christian unity comes from the mission field. In passionate speeches the Lausanne Conference was reminded that for old-

established Christian countries the question was one of expediency and could brook delay, but that for the young Churches struggling for their very existence it was a matter of life and death, and action must be energetic and immediate. The tragic stories of the annihilation of flourishing Christian Churches in Asia Minor and China in bygone centuries are historical facts, and though we at home may prefer to forget, those in the field are forced to remember by each new assault. For them it is unity or destruction. The extension of the Kingdom of God demands a united front. Those concerned, whether in South India or Persia, are not playing at readjustments of their internal organisations for the sake of mutual harmony and economy, good as these ends might be; nor are they acting merely through fear, though the danger of their divided weakness is real. They are fired with a vision of the possibilities of making known the love of Christ to their countrymen. This, they know, can best be done by proclaiming the Gospel, in word and deed, with one mind and one voice, working through one organisation.

If these schemes finally mature we shall have a development of the case already mentioned of the Swedish, Lutheran and Anglican Churches. Churches organically united in one portion of the globe will find themselves more loosely federated with the branches of each other's Churches, which however are not themselves connected in any form of federation. It may seem an anomaly, but truth is greater than theory, and the inspired experiments of the mission field may eventually prove to be the solution of our problems at home, by stirring us to put an end to an anomalous situation. In each of these cases a solution has been reached by

deliberately facing the facts of the situation and allowing them to suggest the remedy.

In other parts of the world attempts have been made towards organic unity. In Australia matters are at a standstill owing to the difficulties raised by our Church. In Canada the negotiations have been successfully carried through without our Church. A short account of these movements will help us to see the possibilities and the difficulties of reunion among the reformed Churches. Turning first to Australia, we find that in 1900 all the various branches of the Presbyterian Church, except the Church of Scotland in Australia, united into one Church. In 1907 all the various Methodist Churches united. In 1918 proposals for the unification of Methodists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians were set on foot. The basis was much the same as in Canada, which in itself is a significant fact, showing the common mind and faith of the members of these Churches in countries whose conditions and development have in other ways been very different. In both cases the general attitude has been Arminian rather than Calvinistic. Together with a tendency to conservatism, there has been present a desire to express truth in terms of modern thought, and to free the articles of belief from an over-weight of ancient phraseology. The voting in favour of such union, though not unanimous, showed a high majority in favour. In round figures, 90 per cent. of the Methodists, 65 per cent. of the Presbyterians and 75 per cent. of the Congregationalists supported the scheme. The vote was taken in 1920, the year of the Lambeth Conference which dealt in a special way with the question of reunion. The Anglicans in 1921, armed with the Lambeth

Quadrilateral enunciated in 1888, and with the Appeal to all Christian People of 1920, entered into negotiation with the other Churches.

The only point which caused difficulty was that of the ministry. Lambeth suggests that all Anglican ministers should receive a commission to minister in the free Churches in the union, and that all Free Church ministers should receive a similar commission by episcopal ordination. The matter was referred to the then Archbishop of York, who insisted on this suggestion finding effect in any Australian scheme of reunion. As this would *ipso facto* be requiring more of others than the Anglicans were ready to concede, and was tantamount to a denial of the spiritual validity of the Free Church orders, the Free Churchmen naturally did not see their way to accept the terms. This decision was taken in 1923, and in 1926 the definite statement was made by them that they could only continue to negotiate on equal terms. The *pourparlers* have therefore come to a standstill. The strength of the Free Church position is made all the greater from the fact that Lambeth, which had promulgated the Quadrilateral in 1888, clearly stated its belief in 1920 in the spiritual reality of the ministries in question. It is clear from this that the nature of the ministry is still a subject for discussion, and that to foreclose discussion, as was done by the Anglicans in Australia, is to go beyond the Lambeth appeal.

When we turn to Canada we find the same three Churches feeling after union and eventually accomplishing it in 1925, without the co-operation of the Anglicans. The first move was taken in 1887 among the Congregationalists. The Methodists worked

energetically for the ideal from 1899, and consummation was only foiled in 1908 through Presbyterian opposition. But after the war, a majority being now in favour, negotiations continued from 1921 to 1925, when in a great inaugural service the three Churches united as one under the name of the United Church of Canada, each bringing its special contribution to enrich the total possession of all. Some 30 per cent. of the Presbyterians, still preferring the *status quo*, contracted out, and retaining their material property, now exist as the continuing Presbyterian Church of Canada. In England we are preparing for just such a fusion. Scotland has already achieved an amalgamation of Presbyterian Churches. The Methodists are in the final stages of becoming the United Methodist Church, and we may look before long for attempts to bring all the Free Churches into one. Similar processes are at work in China.[1]

The foregoing accounts of reunion schemes will have made one point clear. The crux lies in the question of ministry or orders. All turns on whether episcopacy is of the absolute essence of the Church, which cannot be conceived as existing at all without it; or whether it is a form of administration which has proved its worth where it has been maintained, and has shown a persistent tendency to appear under other names where it has been rejected.

On the matter of expediency and proved efficacy of episcopacy many of the Free Churches are with us; at least those who are facing facts and are not bound by traditional theories, for they recognise that under another name they are approximating to a similar form

[1] Cf. Essay VI.

of government. On the repudiation of the necessity of bishops in due succession for the ministry of the Church, they join with the reformed mind of the Church of England and reject as unreformed the attempts of some to bind burdens on others which they cannot themselves bear.

It is time to sum up our position. We have been examining in this essay the problem of the reunion of the reformed Churches. Not only is such a reunion to be contemplated, it is to be desired and worked for. And in this reunion the Church of England is called to take a great part. Its official prestige as the established Church within a great empire makes it prominent in the world, its practice of episcopal succession provides a formal link with those who regard episcopacy as essential, while its refusal to proclaim episcopacy as of the *esse* of the Church, and its full and free acknowledgment of the validity of the ministries of the Word and Sacraments of the Free Churches, naturally draw it into close sympathy with the other children of the Reformation. The Church of England has been called a bridge Church. Only in the sense that those of opposing views still shelter within it can this be regarded as true. The gulf still remains within its borders, as without it, which there is no sign as yet of spanning. Only when it has found the synthesis of the two ideas now rending Christendom (if such synthesis exist) can the Church of England accept the glorious title ascribed to it. Nevertheless may this Church take its part to the full in every Reformed Church reunion scheme, giving the benefit of its spiritual power, worship and administration, and receiving from others the gifts which have come to them through their own religious experience.

The clash of controversy has been about us, and we feel sick at heart and despairing in mind till we recover the note of assurance with which we started. It is the Spirit that builds up organism, and not organism the Spirit. On such a fact we may base our hope. Diversities of gifts were by St. Paul seen to be unified in the Spirit. So too shall diversities of beliefs and interpretations of the riches hid in Christ Jesus, so long as they are true to His mind, be moulded into one by the same Spirit. It behoves us all in the attempt to express our unity to grasp its present reality. The things which are seen, be they Churches or ministries, federations or organic unities, are temporal; it is the things which are not seen that are eternal.

Is not this the key to the solution of our apparently irreconcilable differences? Each of us, whether individually or as a Church, is striving to express some half-hidden, half-revealed truth. We all see through a glass darkly. We may find it hard to say that some fellow-Christian really expresses truth; in some points it is quite possible that he does not—he may, in fact, be perverting the truth; yet we can all believe in his sincerity, and that he is trying to express something which we too express but imperfectly. When later we see face to face, each will recognise his error and understand how it arose. In the sunlight, the twilight will be done away. Remorse will arise, not because we were in part wrong, but because we claimed that we alone could be right. About our differences of opinion it is to-day impossible to adjudicate, but one thing we know and know for certain: that the exclusive spirit cannot in any sense be right, even if the contention about which it is exclusive should prove to be

correct. Such attitude is the Pharisaism Christ sought to redeem when on earth, and He seeks to redeem it still, for He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. His desired unity will be achieved when we demand no less and no more than our common aspiration after the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ. This, and this alone, is true Catholicity.

XI

THE PROMOTION OF UNITY AT HOME

By The Rev. Canon T. Guy Rogers, B.D., M.C., Chaplain to the King; Rector of Birmingham.

THE hopes that were entertained of a general reunion of Christendom after the Lambeth Conference of 1920 have considerably narrowed since then. The decisive "No" of the Roman Church to the approach known as the "Malines conversations" represents, even for the highest of high Churchmen in the Anglican Communion, the end of negotiations for our generation. The attitude of the Orthodox Church, though much more friendly, does not suggest a temper of mind which is at present plastic to reunion. The careful student of the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order will be struck by the mental gap between the Orthodox delegation and the rest of the conference. They are centuries apart. The Orthodox is largely untouched by the modern spirit. His mind is preoccupied with the councils of the undivided Church. Movements of thought and spiritual experience which have swept through Protestant Christendom have left him untouched. He is quite conscious of his isolation, proud of it, even if at times a little perplexed by the rich experience of others. He is content, even resolved, that the reunion movement should get on for the present without him. A speech of Archbishop Germanos sums up the situation:—

> "We desire to declare that in our judgment the most which we can now do is to enter into co-operation with other Churches in the social and moral sphere on a basis of Christian love. Further, we desire to add that, as Orthodox Delegates, we should view a partial reunion of those Churches which share the same principles with satisfaction as a precedent to general reunion, inasmuch as it would thus be easier for our Orthodox Church to discuss reunion with the Churches which had so united into a single Church and had a single faith, than with many Churches with different faiths."

It is apparently only those Churches which have been baptised into the modern spirit which have the courage or the temerity to contemplate immediate reunion. Perhaps it is because their joints are not so stiff with age, and they have less rheumatism to contend with. The Methodists, with great skill and patience, have carried through a union which brings Wesleyans, Primitive and United Methodists in this country all into one fold. A United Church of Canada which includes Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists has come into existence, though not with quite the same success, leaving our own Communion, which is still called the Church of England in Canada, to pursue its separate way. The two great branches of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland celebrated the healing of the ancient breach with a historic service of reunion at S. Giles' Cathedral on October 2nd, 1929.[1]

The fissiparous tendencies of Protestantism have been checked in a remarkable way by this new spirit of unity. It is Protestants who have so far reaped the

[1] See Essay X.

benefit of whatever is stirring in the direction of reunion. The attempt made in the Lambeth Appeal to focus and direct this spirit of unity on larger issues and within a wider circumference is only beginning to bear fruit. Yet it is to these beginnings that the whole Anglican, reformed and Free Church world is turning its eager and questioning gaze. Protestant reunion presents little difficulty where there is the will to unite. The old dividing lines have long since lost their meaning, and the tide of reunion flows easily over the level sands. The Catholic Churches (I use the phrase as it is employed on the Continent) by their own deliberate choice stand aside from the flowing tide. It is upon the Anglican Church in its relation to the Free Churches that the full force of the tide is now beating. It is upon the result that the future progress of the reunion movement must largely depend.

The Church of England has been affectionately and hopefully described on the Continent as *die Brücke Kirche*, the bridge Church with affinities both Catholic and Protestant, which might prove the medium for approach and intercourse between Catholic and Reformed. The simile is not without attractiveness or an element of truth. It is much to be preferred to another, rather cynical description of it, as " a road under repair blocked at both ends," which has also in it an element of truth. But too much emphasis on the bridge character of the Church of England may suggest a static attitude which would do small justice to the possibilities of the moment. This tide of reunion which is flowing so strongly will not adapt itself to stationary metaphors. Whether the Church of England is really a bridge of solid masonry or, as the

Roman Catholics assert, no better than *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, the metaphor itself is not quite what we need. There is no question at this juncture of the stately march of Catholics across an Anglican bridge to meet with Protestants advancing from the other side. Such a view is a mere figment of the imagination. It is a much smaller thing in which we are engaged, and which cannot be very conveniently expressed by the metaphor of a bridge. The water flowing under the bridge would be a better expression than the bridge itself. Is this stream of reunion, this tide of new grace, to affect our Church and bring it into closer relation with such other Churches as have been baptised into its power?

This way of looking at the movement towards unity seems to be more in keeping with what we know of the movement of the Spirit of God. It takes us away, at any rate, from the idea of two sets of disputants in the Church of England, standing on guard at either end of the bridge, and exacting tribute at a Catholic or Protestant toll-gate. This is a picture which often rises in my mind when I see how much controversy there is when anyone seeks to pass over the bridge. The fact is that the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Unity has only touched certain parts of the Catholic Church as yet. Neither the Roman Church nor the Baptist Church, each with its own peculiar justification for exclusiveness, has felt to any large extent the new movement. But the Church of England, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists have experienced the flowing of the tide, and it is with them in a very concrete way that we are concerned.

In Persia, the Anglican Church in the south, which

has recently "discovered" through the coming of motor transport to the country, the Presbyterian Church in the north, finds itself moved by the Spirit to unite with it. The Presbyterian Church, having discovered the Anglican Church in the same way, is equally willing and anxious to unite. It seems the obvious thing in a heathen country. A spontaneous movement arises amongst the Persian Christians which involves the blending of Anglican and Presbyterian polity and practice.[1]

In South India in another way the same results are arrived at on a larger scale. The work of evangelisation draws together groups of Christians from different denominations, notably Anglican, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Congregationalist, who see their denominational differences fade away into nothingness in the spiritual unity which comes to them in the pursuit of the common aim of evangelising South India for Christ. They start to work to harmonise and adjust their respective systems, so that in their institutional life they may be allowed to enjoy the unity of the Spirit which they have already found. Hence the carefully formulated proposals for a "South Indian Church" which may embody as far as may be the original vision, and provide as far as may be an instrument for the desired aim.[2]

We are not concerned in this essay with a discussion of either of these schemes. I am only at pains to show the particular direction which this movement of the Spirit has taken. Not all the denominations in South India are affected by it. Mr. Gordon in a letter to *The British Weekly*[3] makes it clear that the

[1] See Essay VII. [2] See Essay VIII. [3] Cf. September 12, 1929.

Baptist Communion, numbering ninety-one thousand, stands outside of the movement.

All that we can say is that throughout a large section of the Protestant world and throughout the Church of England the impulse to unity is felt so strongly that comprehensive schemes of reunion are taking concrete shape. For us as members of the Church of England the significant thing is that these schemes do include by voluntary consent our own Communion in various parts of the world. The Lambeth encyclical has borne fruit, not perhaps exactly as it was hoped; to some the branches will appear lopsided and the fruit too much of one size and colour, but fruit—good edible fruit—has made its appearance. The encyclical need not be cursed like the barren fig tree, nor need it be said there is now nothing but leaves of empty talk. Neither need the fruit be cursed now that it has arrived. We should do better to make haste to garner it before it has been nipped by the winter frosts.

What has been demonstrated is that the isolation of the Church of England is at an end. The Church of England can find a way which commends itself to a vast number of reasonable people to enter into communion with a large part of the Free Churches. This is the discovery of our generation. What the discoveries of future generations may be we cannot say, and we earnestly hope that they may be richer and fuller than ours; but no talk about the future can daunt us with regard to the value of the discovery which our generation has made its own. The adventure of the mission field has brought back something better than the gold of the Indies. It has brought

back unity. Our argosies return laden not with the spoils of other countries, but with the rich experience of life lived in new conditions under obedience to new movements of the Spirit of God. Up the Thames and the Mersey, the Tyne and the Clyde comes the produce of the mission field, the fruits of the Gospel, grown in Indian or African or Persian soil.

As the result of this movement of the Spirit which has, as observers expected, begun at the circumference, the home Church has a new situation to face. It is as if we were standing on the shore face to face with an incoming tide. We have to decide whether we will strip, go in and bathe, or retire inland for safety. There are some who want to get quickly on to higher ground and avoid the tide altogether. There are some who do not mind wetting their feet provided they can keep their bodies dry. There are others who want to enjoy the rollers and the surf and to plunge light-heartedly into the waters.

This new phase of the movement finds us only partially prepared. The transition from conference to action, although inevitable, has startled many people who had acquired the conference habit. The attempt to embody in actual practice principles arrived at in debate has caused surprise and even resentment in certain quarters. Yet these concrete proposals for unity are the acid test of reality. The talk which cannot be implemented in the institutional life of the Church is so much waste of time to busy people.

We have to reckon with the fact that the age of action or experiment has arrived. The Continuation Committee of the Lausanne Conference may quite properly appoint a committee of experts to consider

the doctrinal differences which revealed themselves at Lausanne, and the Doctrinal Commission of the Church of England may continue its useful domestic work for our own Church, but there is now a sufficient consensus of opinion amongst large groups to justify constructive or reconstructive action. The evolutionary origin of the ministry and of the episcopate in particular has been established as a workable thesis to the satisfaction of many scholarly minds. The value of elasticity as opposed to uniformity in institutional life is now generally conceded. The right of the laity to sit with the clergy in synod as an acknowledgment of the priesthood of the whole body is rapidly gaining ground. The recognition of the differences of temperament where worship is concerned is altering the general outlook and making the problem of comprehension much more easy to solve. It is evident that we must prepare in the near future for further experiments in reunion in our own country.

It is true that the work of preparation has already begun, and as we look back, it is perhaps surprising that with such progress as we have made there should be any hesitation about going further. Long before the Lambeth Conference of 1920 the spiritual atmosphere had become charged with reunion. A series of books, such as *Unity and Schism* by Canon Lacey, *Church Divisions and Christianity* by W. L. Grane, *The Churches at the Crossroads* by Dr. Shakespeare, *Towards Reunion* by members of the Mansfield Conference, and above all Dr. Headlam's great classic *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion* bore witness to the intense interest which had been aroused. One clear gain was achieved by this preliminary discussion. The

direction of the reunion movement was settled. Henceforth its aim was to be not federation, but organic unity. The easier course was ruled out. The deeper, more difficult, but more satisfying one was to be taken. It became evident that the way would be long and that the work of preparation must be undertaken immediately. Under the authority of the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference, Anglican pulpits began slowly to open to Free Church ministers, and the presence of Free Church communicants at Anglican celebrations of Holy Communion became frequent. The opening of our pulpits to chosen representatives of the Free Church ministry removed what had come to be felt as an absurd anomaly. Sir George Adam Smith had been frequently preached from our pulpits before ever he preached himself. It was generally felt that this "concession" was long overdue as a slight acknowledgment of the debt which we owed to Free Church theology; and although this permission was carefully safeguarded by an official limitation "to those who were known to be working for reunion," it was recognised that the driving force which secured this modification of Church of England practice was the sense of indebtedness both to the scholarship and the evangelism of the Free Church ministry. I say "Church of England" practice advisedly, for the practice of some other branches of the Anglican Communion has not been correspondingly modified. Until 1929 no clergyman of the Scottish Episcopal Church could invite a Presbyterian or any other minister not episcopally ordained to preach in his pulpit. Even now his own bishop cannot give him permission to do so. If the greatness of the occasion warrants it he

may apply for permission to the college of bishops, who corporately, but not individually, possess the power of dispensation. Conditions are still wintry in the North.

The slight encouragement given to the reception of Nonconformists at the Lord's Table by the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference has proved wholly inadequate to meet the growing experience of unity. Quite rightly, popular "feeling" has attached far more importance to elasticity in this direction than to any rapid extension of interchange of pulpits. So long as the principle of interchange is conceded and the great preachers of Nonconformity can be admitted to our cathedrals and parish churches, the multiplication of exchanges is of doubtful value. Even within our own Church the parish priest, for good reasons of his own, selects his outside preachers with considerable care. But the selective process does not operate where sacramental fellowship is concerned, and it is here that the real interchange is desired by those who mutually share in the growing experience of unity.

Considerable advance has been made along the restricted lines which are possible. When interdenominational conferences meet, the semi-secret methods of making it known "between you and me and the door-post" that no objection will be raised to non-Anglicans attending the celebration in church next morning, have been replaced in many cases by a frank and cordial invitation from the chair. The writer was present a short time ago at such a celebration (true it was not on British soil), where the Anglican bishop who celebrated not only invited the presence of Nonconformists, but also invited Nonconformist

ministers to read the Epistle and the Gospel. It was entirely a spontaneous act called forth by the special circumstances of the moment: a party of Church of England clergy, Presbyterian and Free Church ministers were travelling together in a strange country on a mission of fellowship and peace. For them there could be but one altar, one Table of the Lord. To go their several ways would have been to deny the very mission on which they were sent.

It was the same spontaneous sense of divine necessity which drew the great majority of the delegates to the Jerusalem Meeting to the one Communion service on Easter Day, 1928. Unthought of, unplanned, in many cases even previously ruled out as something neither to be anticipated nor welcomed, when the moment came and the spiritual unity experienced at the conference was at its height, there was simply nothing else to be done. For that world-wide gathering too there was on that Easter Day but one altar, one Table of the Lord.

An increasing number of church-people find it impossible when brought into spiritual fellowship with their fellow Christians at such inter-denominational conferences not to join with them in the Sacrament, quite regardless of whether the celebrant has been or has not been episcopally ordained. To keep quite rigidly within the old restrictions has proved impossible. Here and there through chinks and gaps in the institutional system, the new life, the new experience is forcing its way through, and, unless room is made for it by expanding the system, competent observers prophesy that it may burst the system into little pieces.

We must recognise that we have arrived at an inter-

mediate stage between no sacramental communion outside our denominational limits and full intercommunion which is the ultimate goal of a united Church. We recognise our common Faith, and give expression to it, even though we have not yet adopted " a uniform procedure " with regard to the Creed. So, too, as Dr. Adams Brown points out in his illuminating essay in *The Reunion of Christendom*, " as regards the Sacrament, it must be equally possible to bring that existing unity to expression in action without waiting for the time when all questions of Order have been satisfactorily settled." It is this conviction that makes so many of us feel as he feels, that " failure to commune at certain times and in certain places where the spiritual conditions for such communion seem to be present creates a public scandal and does violence to the conscience of those who are there." [1]

Alongside these lines of advance which affect only the *élite* of our Church members must be reckoned the efforts which are being made to bring Church members, as such, of various denominations into friendly and corporate relations with one another. This is

[1] *The Reunion of Christendom*, edited by Sir James Marchant, pp. 222, 223.

The following testimony to the psychological value of intercommunion on such occasions as are referred to by Dr. Brown has just arrived from the mission field of Japan.

" I was much struck the other day by a little incident in which I played a part. One of the leading Methodist missionaries out here came up to me after a group of C.M.S. men had deliberately attended a united Communion taken by a Methodist Bishop at the close of our Annual Conference of Federated Missions and said—' To see your men there made me want to go straight away to receive ordination at the hands of one of your bishops that we might become one.' He would never have said that if we had presented to him the most clear and cogent argument for the need of episcopal ordination."

quite different from the aim of the Life and Work Movement, which on a vast and magnificent scale seeks to create unity as a kind of glorious bye-product through the pursuit of a common task. Here and there attempts are being made to bring members of a particular church and chapel together for purposes of recreation or worship or education. Not so long ago in a particular part of London-over-the-Border the relations between Churches had become so friendly that a Parochial Church Council could quite easily entertain the elders and deacons of the neighbouring Presbyterian Church and be still more royally entertained on a return visit.

This kind of spade-work is undoubtedly the great preliminary to reunion, and even to any further general advance in intercommunion, or welcoming of outside preachers from other denominations. The gap between what leaders desire and are prepared to accept and what ordinary members of congregations desire and are prepared to accept is still considerable; and those who feel the full force of the reunion movement beating about their own souls, colouring their thought, and penetrating all their aims will do well to take this into account. It is not enough to say that this movement is of the Spirit and must prevail. Many visions have been before the Church, and many times has the Church been "disobedient to the heavenly vision" because prophets and leaders have failed to carry the people with them.

The most hopeful sign of coming success is that this fact is being slowly recognised, and that first steps are being taken to bring this business of reunion down to the notice and the conscience of the Church masses.

The conversion of one Church Council, or of a single congregation, to faith in organic unity as a practical possibility is an epoch-making event in the spiritual life of the locality where it occurs. The key to the position at the present moment is in the hands of parochial clergy and Free Church ministers.

It would be too much to say that the last word has been said by scholars on the origins of Church life or on the doctrinal basis of reunion, but we might very nearly say that the last word has been said for our generation. Canon Streeter's latest book adds to our confidence in certain conclusions rather than to the conclusions themselves. The knowledge that one more great scholar has reviewed the evidence and arrived at substantially the same conclusions as are to be found, for example, in Dr. Headlam's book adds greatly to our satisfaction, but we could still have taken our risks without it. Our theoretical position is sufficiently assured. It is the work of conversion which lies before us, the application and the preaching of the Gospel of unity in relation to the institutional life of to-day. Once again parochial middlemen are needed, just as when the scientific view of the universe, with all its repercussions on theological thought and usage, was worked out for us in the universities. Then the need became urgent of parochial middlemen who could interpret and translate the meaning of the new outlook to ordinary people and help them to relate their faith and practice to it. So now the urgent need is to carry over to the congregations this new world outlook on unity. There are principles to be preached, prejudices to be overcome, new customs and practices to be introduced. Worship and social habits need to be

reformed. Particular schemes have to be examined. The whole constituency of the Church of England and the Free Churches has to be aroused, informed and prepared for action.

Such work can best be done by methods of group study. One reason why the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement has in so many matters achieved a common mind, and has become through its members a strong leavening influence in diocesan life, is its steady adherence through all its history to group study. This method is now being extended so as to permeate the lay members of the Movement with the same desire to achieve a common mind. The present concrete proposals for reunion will now be presented in this way, and a beginning will be made, through these groups, of creating a mass opinion on the subject of Christian unity. It is natural that the laity of the Church of England should be only mildly interested during the preliminary stages of the reunion movement, while scholars are busy delving into ancient records and defining the course and limitations of Catholicity. To ordinary men and women it seems like setting the stage before the actors appear. But when the constructive stage of reunion appears, involving adjustment and change in the ordinary Church life with which they are familiar, the whole subject from its preliminary to its most recent phase becomes of absorbing interest. There is introduced a note of reality, as they understand reality, which makes it worth while to study, discriminate, appraise and act. On the question of "How reunion will work out in practice" they feel they are vitally concerned. They will not hesitate to come into the arena, and the group method is

intended to secure that they will come in on the right side.

The possibility of their coming in on the wrong side is not to be overlooked or ignored; for until the movement of the Spirit touches and fires the hearts of ordinary Church members with the same enthusiasm as burns in ourselves, the cause is liable to be defeated, not on grounds of principle, but through prejudice and conservatism. We might easily experience the most irritating delays through ignorance or social pride or the undue guarding of vested interests.

At present the battle rages round the question whether Catholic principles are at stake, but those who are taking their risks in the reunion movements of to-day have already settled that question for themselves. We are not greatly concerned with the last echoes of the controversy. We are more concerned to secure that the tide of the Spirit should flow freely through the Church, submerging the natural sandbanks of human obstinacy or pride. No better method of appealing to all that is best in Church life and securing early and intelligent adhesion to the cause of reunion can easily be thought of than this method of group study. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. A few Church councillors who thoroughly understand, and who have caught the great idea, could convert a whole council. A few leading laymen could carry a diocesan conference with them. A reunion group could by virtue of the inherent spiritual power of its cause even dominate the Church Assembly. It is to this group method, as it gradually extends throughout the whole Church, that we must look for progress and results.

A study of the way in which reunion has been achieved amongst the various types of Methodists and between the two great sections of Scottish Presbyterianism will show how under other names this group method has been found essential to progress. We read of the conference or the Assembly constantly "sending down" proposals for further discussion and examination to the smaller units which make up the constituency. The overwhelming majorities finally secured were the result not of spectacular debates in the representative assembles, but of the conversions which gradually took place in the course of group work in sessions or circuit meetings. Reunion came by percolation, and the group method provided the necessary channel. The proposals which had commended themselves to the intelligence and the sympathy of the smaller groups came back with irresistible force to the larger whole. The result would almost certainly be the same in the Church of England if it adopted a method which has so far been found essential for carrying through any scheme of formal reunion.

But a further extension of this group method might well be tried where circumstances allowed. I do not know how far in the history of the reunion movement little groups from each of the denominations contemplating reunion were encouraged to meet together to discuss the concrete proposals submitted jointly by their respective Churches. It may be argued that better discipline is achieved by keeping the rank and file severely apart, while the respective leaders arrange for what is to percolate and how it is to percolate through the respective denominations. That is the monarchical view, which seeks that reunion shall be

carried through strictly according to plan, and mistrusts the spontaneous sympathies and judgments of the people. To those who hold such a view St. Paul must seem a highly dangerous person, and his advice to the simple members of the Thessalonian Church singularly indiscreet: "Put all things to the test, hold fast that which is good." It would seem, however, to be more in keeping with the movement of the Spirit in our own day to encourage not only negotiations from above, but also intercourse from below, and the group method need not necessarily be confined within the limits of each denomination concerned. There is no reason why Jordan should not overflow its banks or why the stream of the Spirit should not overflow denominational barriers. Just as in the history of the Anglican and the Free Church Fellowships joint meetings became essential as the larger vision of the Church began to occupy the mind, so there is no reason why the adoption of the group method of furthering reunion should not bring together Anglicans and Free Churchmen either in single groups or in joint meetings of separate groups.

In this coming together of the rank and file of the Churches lies the great hope for the future. Already the inter-denominational method has become associated with all great enterprises for touching the religious life of our people. The Diocesan Council for Youth finds its operations cramped until it begins to work with other youth movements outside the Church of England. The strictly Church crusade gives way to the inter-denominational crusade in a big city. The history of the Student Christian Movement shows that no one Church or denomination is in a position to meet the

spiritual needs of its younger members. The experience of Christ in the world of to-day is a richer experience than can be found in any one institution which seeks to represent Him. Hence the charm of the inter-denominational conference, with all its anticipations of reunion. The more vigorous and alert of our younger members are conscious of this movement of the Spirit, which everywhere is breaking down external barriers of separation. The dividing lines which separate them from older members and older ways of thinking in their own Church are far more real than the frontier lines which are supposed to separate them from the more vigorous and alert young people in other Churches. There is a growing similarity of outlook on the interpretation of Christ to the world of to-day which already makes them one. The institutional life, while it has not lost its value, has entirely lost its rigidity. Its possible modification or adaptation is contemplated with satisfaction. New alignments are awaited with eagerness. The group which brings together people of different temperaments and different Church connections is popular no longer for its novelty, but for the deeper experience of Christ which it is found to offer. So, too, in the deeper experience of Christ which is sought in reunion, we may expect to see the union group preparing the way for the union Church.

It is all-important that this aim—the one aim that really matters—of the reunion movement should be clearly grasped. It is a deeper experience of Christ which is desired, that we may more perfectly do His will. The action which is proposed to bring it about, whether in the South Indian scheme or in any other

scheme on similar lines, is not iconoclastic, but simply the best constructive attempt that we can make to find room in our institutional life for a new experience of Christ which is already ours. The Christ who makes all Christians one in one organic union has not yet been "rediscovered," though He may stand waiting to be revealed to a deeper faith and a deeper penitence than are to be found in the Christendom of to-day. But the Christ who is ready to make some of us one has been discovered inside and outside the Church of England. And with that discovery has come the conviction that only in accepting this new experience can we do His will for our day and generation. Some of the arguments which are advanced for reunion make the subject look a little shabby. It is not because the shrinkage of Church membership in the various denominations makes retrenchment and consolidation desirable. It is not for economic or utilitarian reasons. It is not for the sake of pan-Protestantism or pan-Catholicism. It is not even for the Church's own sake. It is because the larger fellowship means a deeper experience of Christ, and a deeper experience of Christ is essential for the carrying out of his purpose both for ourselves and for the world.

To sum up: such parts of the Christian Church as have been touched by the modern spirit (which is only the revival of the spirit of free intercourse amongst Christians) are seeking to coalesce. In quite a wonderful way the researches of scholars have made clear to us the freedom in unity and the unity in freedom possessed by the early Church. Side by side with this historic movement has appeared the working of the Spirit in the fervent desire of men's hearts. From many

lands and many types of Christian organisation has come the same movement which asks for a larger, freer, more expansive life, which may embody their growing experience of Christ. Our own Church is deeply moved, and the long preparatory work of which I have spoken is entering upon a new phase preparatory to action. The older loyalties which kept our Church isolated, in deference to other Churches which refused to move, are loosening. The tide of the Spirit carries us irresistibly forward, and it is not possible to suit our pace to theirs. To linger is to miss what others are finding and to be shut out from the experience which they will presently enjoy.

No one who has been moved by the growing hope of reunion cares to contemplate the disillusionment, the sense of futility, the embarrassment to faith which would follow the failure to achieve some measure of reunion in which our own Church is privileged to share. We recognise that the era of constructive action which has arrived finds the home Church still far behind the Church of India in readiness for the task. But we know that our future is bound up with her present crisis. Let Indian hopes be defeated, and our own may be long postponed. Let the Indian Church achieve her desire, and the impetus which we will receive will make action for us possible at no distant date. And even though we can no longer hope to be pioneers, we may, through ripened experience, add something to the delicacy of the original plan and the beauty of the final structure.

XII

THE MIND OF CHRIST AND LAMBETH 1930

By The Rev. V. F. Storr, M.A., Canon of Westminster

THAT there is a growing impulse towards unity among the different branches of the Church, which is felt all the world over, cannot be denied. The tide has begun to flow, and will increase in volume. It cannot, indeed, be said that there is as yet a general will to unity among Christians, but reunion is no longer a mere academic question for debate. It has become a living issue, born of intense spiritual convictions and desires. The decade which has elapsed since the bishops made their appeal for unity at the last Lambeth Conference has witnessed a marked development of interest in the question of reunion and an enhanced sense of the folly and wrongness of our existing divisions. In connection with the problem a new note of urgency is heard; there is a demand that mere discussion shall give place to definite action. There is "a spirit afloat"; stagnant waters are being stirred; new visions shape themselves on the horizon. No committees can create a movement of this kind. Committees on reunion, wherever they exist, are there only as the expression of deep, underlying spiritual forces. It is essential, then, that we study schemes of reunion against this larger background. If they are to be properly appreciated they must be viewed in a big-scale perspective.

Other essays in the volume have explored parts of this wider background. They have dealt with the missionary situation overseas, as it is to-day; with the rise of national Churches; with the growth in the primitive Christian society of an ordered ministry; with the Church of England at the Reformation. What has there been said need not here be repeated. But perhaps there is room in the book for an essay which tries to relate the problem of unity to some of the fundamental conceptions which lie at the source of the Christian religion. After all, the real background of any question of Church order, or polity, is God, His purpose and activity, and the revelation which He has given of Himself in Jesus Christ. The nature of our religion depends upon our thought of God, which in turn governs the external or institutional expressions of our religion.

Let us, then, begin by reflecting upon the character of God's spiritual activity. Spirit is not an easy word to define, but one of its essential marks, whether in its human or divine manifestations, is free creativeness. As spirits we are creators, using, indeed, materials which we did not ourselves make, but shaping them to our own purposes. "God is a Spirit," and, just because He is God, the range of His creativeness infinitely exceeds our own. But He and we are akin in possessing this creative power. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." Here is written the Spirit's charter. God in dealing with individual souls matches His treatment to the wide diversity of human nature, and can save by

accustomed or unaccustomed channels of influence. In like manner, in the broader fields of history He uses a variety of methods and organisations for the execution of His purposes. This free creativeness of the divine Spirit must be always emphasised.

Spirit, partly because it is thus creative, but also because it is "for itself" and has intrinsic value, everywhere possesses the primacy. What we call matter does not exist in its own right; it exists as the instrument of spirit: it is there to be known and used.

> "For of the soule the bodie forme doth take,
> For soule is forme and doth the bodie make."

We do not know the secret of life, but a living thing differs from a machine because there is in it some life-principle, which controls the growth of the organism. It builds up the material substance of the plant or animal into a body with definite shape, regulates the assimilation of food, and repairs injured tissues. This life-giving principle manifests itself in an ascending scale of values. At the one end of the scale you have the amoeba, with whatever measure of spontaneity and creativeness the amoeba possesses; at the other end you have man, a person with self-consciousness and the power of moral choice. In the evolutionary process spirit has been progressively manifesting itself, moving in the direction of increased creativeness, and using matter as its instrument.

Now historical institutions have undergone a constant process of development in the past because their outward forms have been felt to be an inadequate expression of the spiritual principles underlying them. Part of the creativeness of spirit is found just in this

fact, that it makes new and richer embodiments of itself; it breaks up the old that out of it it may bring forth fresh and more serviceable forms of organisation. That is the story of evolution, the story of a continuous process in which the new, and frequently the higher, emerges. God is like the householder of the parable, who from his treasures brings out the old and the new; but the new always in continuity with the old. Is institutional religion any exception to this law of the Spirit's operation?

There are those who maintain that in the case of the Christian Church you have an exception to the free creativeness of the Spirit, because in this one case the Spirit has selected certain channels, the Sacraments, and a certain type of organisation, the threefold ministry, and has limited the flow of His *fullest* blessings to these channels. But by what conceivable test can it be proved that the spiritual blessing given through a Sacrament in an episcopal Church is greater than that given through a Sacrament in a non-episcopal Church? On this ground, as is indeed being increasingly conceded, a rational defence of episcopal ministry cannot be made. But if the defence takes other ground, then we are at once confronted with this fact of the free creativeness of the divine Spirit, and have to face the question whether considerations of order, validity, regularity and the like can be fairly put in the scale against the leading of the Spirit in another direction, if we have reasons for believing that the Spirit is so leading. My plea is only that we shall try to view all questions of ecclesiastical organisation against this larger background of the divine creativeness.

Spirit, again, shows freedom in the intensity of its

operations. We "put more of ourselves" into some actions than we do into others. The emotional rhythm of our lives is not uniform; attention and interest alternately flag and quicken. We trace the same ebb and flow in God's activity in history. At times He appears to us to be more creative than at other times. Hebrew prophecy was a spiritual movement in which God's creativeness was very intense, but it lasted only a comparatively short period. Greek sculpture had but a brief flowering time. The history of Christianity is made up of alternations between periods of spiritual change and revival, and periods of pause or lethargy. As someone has said, there is no uniform time-rate for spiritual activity. God doubtless is always desirous to give us as much of His Spirit as we can receive, and His blessings are withheld only because we have failed to fit ourselves for His gifts. We cannot attribute spiritual laziness to God. But none can deny that He has His specially creative epochs; and in one of these we seem to be living to-day, when a new world is in the making. Hence arises this question for decision, a question solemn, urgent, vital. May not God in the present movement towards reunion be calling the Church to a fresh venture in the interests of deeper truth and a larger unity?

Church history from New Testament times to the present day is full of examples of good men passionately resisting, in what they conceived to be the interests of God's cause, movements and ideas which subsequently were seen to be the very things which God was trying to teach the world. The heterodoxy of one age becomes the orthodoxy of the next; the prophet has his monument built by the children of

the men who stoned him. None of us can approach a problem such as this of reunion without presuppositions and a bias due to past training or temperament. But there are narrower and larger loyalties; and at times it is well to take all our prejudices and habitual modes of thinking and spread them out in the sight of God, asking Him to enable us to see them, so far as may be, with His eyes. The spring, whose waters we direct down a channel, may keep for months its regulated flow. But one day it bursts its bounds, floods the dry soil around it, and wakes to life the hidden seeds of flowers. Is the spring of God's creativeness waiting to overflow to-day?

Schemes of reunion have also to be considered against the background of the mind of Jesus Christ. The Christian religion owes its origin to Him; He created the fellowship out of which the Church grew. Every branch of the Church looks to Him, directly or indirectly, as its Founder, and draws from Him its energies and life. He is greater than all the Churches put together. That every Church has still much to learn from Him few will deny; but is it not true that we to-day have special opportunities for understanding His mind? "It is certainly not too much to say, He is to-day more studied and better known as He was and as He lived than at any period between now and the first age of the Church." [1] Why is this? It is because the rise of the historical method has forced theology to become historical. The modern historian, if he is not content with being a mere chronicler of facts, seeks to employ a sympathetic imagination in his interpretation of the past. He has a feeling for the

[1] *Christ in Modern Theology*, by A. M. Fairbairn, p. 3.

past, which was lacking in the eighteenth century, when an artificial and abstract method of writing history was prevalent. He aims, of course, at being scientific; that is, he wishes to discover the real truth about past events; and tries to trace out historical movements in their continuity, and to discover their deep underlying causes. But he tries to do more: he tries to reproduce the past, so far as that is possible, in its verisimilitude, to bring vividly before his readers its moving life, its living actors, to clothe it with something of the feeling of the present. The romantic movement has in this field powerfully influenced the historical method. And this method, applied to the origin of Christianity, and in particular to the life of its Founder, has resulted in giving us a new picture of Jesus Christ, and a new feeling for His person. This "return to Christ" has greatly enriched our knowledge of Him as He lived in Palestine, and has enabled us to enter into His mind with increased insight.

Theology is systematic thinking about God; Christian theology is systematic thinking about God as revealed in Christ. The various doctrines of Christian theology are attempts to give orderly intellectual form to the thoughts and experiences which have arisen from the Person, life and work of Christ. Christian doctrine is rooted in historical facts, but passes beyond the facts to their interpretation. The interpretation of the facts involves the use of the speculative reason. Now the whole of Christian theology has been deeply affected by the rise of the historical method. It has been forced to submit its speculative constructions to the test of history. We ask at once to-day of any

doctrine: How did it come to be? Is there real warrant for it in the facts of the past, or the facts of the present? Has it gathered to itself as it has developed accretions which do not properly belong to it? Theology, in other words, which in a former age was doctrinal before it was historical, has now become historical in order that it may be doctrinal.[1] There is a vital distinction between these two attitudes or tempers. If we are doctrinal to the neglect of history we may easily reduce the freer and larger movement of history to our own narrow measure. This has constantly happened in theological speculation in the past. The theologians have viewed the past through their own glasses, have seen there only what they wanted to see, and have sought to impose upon the Church a one-sided view of truth. But if we are historical in order that we may be doctrinal, we shall be in less danger of forcing facts to fit preconceived opinions, and shall be more prepared to see how many-sided a thing is truth, and how rich in variety is the moving and growing world of reality.

The historical method is, then, genetic: it seeks to understand what it is investigating by tracing out its development and discovering the source from which it originated. The whole range of Christian doctrine has come under the scope of this method; so has the Church as an institution; so also has the literature of the New Testament. And behind this whole manifold development is found the creative personality of Jesus Christ. Is it any wonder that scholars have with reverent care sought to reproduce for us His figure in all its freshness as He moved among His

[1] Cf. Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 4.

contemporaries; studying Him in the context of history in which He lived; feeling that the more clear was their vision of Him, the more surely would they be able to estimate at their true worth subsequent developments in the story of Christianity, which look back to Him as their originating cause?

We must, let us remember, have some standard for testing historical developments, because history is made, not solely by the march of tendencies and forces, over which man has no control, but by the clash and collision of human wills. Men are fallible and make mistakes; they are often blind and fail to see the signs of the times. Hence developments occur which are aberrations from the true line of progress, and have to be corrected. Seeds, as a rule, grow true to type; but the growth of the seed is regulated from the first by the hidden forces in the seed. But the prime factor in history is the human person with his freedom, and his consequent liability to error. Have all the developments in theological speculation or ecclesiastical organisation been faultless? There is no Christian who is not dissatisfied with some things which he finds in the thought or practice of other branches of the Church than his own. Some test we need; and where can it be found save in the mind of Jesus Christ?

Interpretation of His mind, of course, differs, and notably on the question of ministerial succession, where sharp divergencies of view reveal themselves. These have been sufficiently discussed elsewhere in this volume, which supports the general position that there is no adequate historical evidence for the more rigid theory of Apostolical succession. Here it need

only be said that the broad principle, that in a development it is the end and not the beginning which gives you the meaning of the process, must be applied critically to a historical development. It does not follow that, because the threefold ministry emerged after a period of experiment and fluidity in organisation, therefore Christ had in mind that particular form of ministry for His Church. Nor, though we believe that the Church was guided of God in the adoption of the threefold ministry, does it follow that it is a complete expression of the mind of Jesus. That mind was something much bigger and more comprehensive than any particular rendering of it in the field of organised religion, and it is His comprehensiveness which we must always keep in view. In our interest in a special problem we must not lose sight of the wider background.

Can we now indicate some of the characteristics of the mind of Christ which is to be our standing criterion for testing all subsequent developments? (*a*) First, He surely stands above and beyond our ecclesiastical divisions. He does not seem to have been interested in secondary questions of organisation. He left to the fellowship which He founded two Sacraments, and the principle of a ministry; but gave no fixed constitution to the Church which was to arise. He was familiar in the Jewish religion with a hierarchical system, and with an elaborately organised ecclesiastical polity, but when He unfolded the nature of the fellowship He was founding He described it in quite other terms. His mind was of the prophetic rather than the priestly order. In his recorded teaching (and this is all upon which we have to go) He spoke of the Church only

twice; but the Kingdom was one of His central themes. He seems to have conceived of religion in terms of the family and its life rather than in terms of the Church. Men were sons of God, and brothers one to another, and so should live the life of filial and fraternal love. It can hardly be denied that His interest was primarily ethical and religious.

(*b*) In His teaching the emphasis is upon God, upon man's relationship to God, upon the sin and selfishness which spoil that relationship, and upon Himself as a new source of life and power for men. In His scale of values these were the things which really mattered and counted in the counsels of eternity. To character and conduct He gave supreme importance. Moral goodness had for Him a worth which nothing else had. It is unnecessary to multiply instances of His appeal to the fundamental spiritual instincts and needs of humanity, and of the depth and breadth of His teaching in this regard; but the following sayings may be quoted as containing in themselves a challenge to us to be sure that our estimates are the same as His own:

> "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." [1]

> "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." [2]

> "And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. But

[1] St. John iv. 20, 24. [2] St. Matt. xviii. 20.

Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against you is for you." [1]

If we ponder on these sayings, can we fail to admit that we frequently place an emphasis on matters which, if we regard the whole proportion of His teaching, are of secondary importance?

(*c*) If we are asked to single out the most characteristic feature of His ethical teaching we shall have to say that it is His insistence on love, as not only the supreme virtue, but the root from which all the virtues spring. To love God is the first and great commandment; to love one's neighbour the second. The test of Christian discipleship was love: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." [2]

Now love is the principle of unity. Where love reigns, barriers are broken down, hostilities disappear; men realise their common brotherhood. The mind of Christ was a mind which willed unity among men. The kingdom which He came to establish was in ideal coextensive with humanity. His will was that all men should be citizens of this kingdom, which, though it must of necessity have institutional and external expression, is in essence spiritual and of the heart. The question at once arises whether a kingdom so universal in scope can be adequately expressed through any one type of human organisation. When account is taken of the variety of human nature, of racial and psychological differences, themselves the result of causes reaching back into the remotest past, must not more than one type of organisation in the ecclesiastical field

[1] St. Luke ix. 49, 50. [2] St. John xiii. 35.

be required? As love prevails in the Church, competing types of organisation will surely vanish. But complementary and co-operating types may still remain. None can predict what future centuries may have in store for the Christian fellowship in the matter of its external form. But whenever Christians are confronted with a question of organisation which bears upon Christ's ideal of unity, the standard of His mind directs us to see that we do all things in love, and with the end of promoting love, which is the creative principle of unity itself.

To some the proposals of the South India Church appear revolutionary; to others they appear to be evolutionary—marking, that is, a stage of advance towards greater unity, which springs naturally out of the movements and events of the last ten or twenty years. The life of an organism is a process of growth in which the vital values of the past are taken up into the present, to be themselves the parents of further changes in the future. The development is continuous and orderly, and all that is of worth in the past is conserved, though it may change its form or be put to new uses. The point which will be at issue in the Lambeth Conference of 1930 is just this: whether these reunion proposals adequately conserve the past Catholic principles and heritage of the Church; or whether they abandon something which is of such intrinsic importance that the scheme must be rejected. With the bishops lies a decision whose gravity can hardly be over-estimated. But it is not only the bishops who are concerned in this matter. The whole Church is so concerned; and the bishops will be greatly helped in making up their minds if they know that they

have behind them a great body of Christian people, who have been thinking and praying over the issue. Decisions have not infrequently been governed by fear of consequences. A Christian surely has nothing to fear, if he believes in God's governance of the world and of the Church. We have to make up our minds, after a careful survey of all the factors, whether God wills this thing or no. If we come to the conclusion that He is calling the Church to this fresh venture, then the future can be left in His hands. It is wise to look before you leap; but some look so long that they never leap at all. In this matter we have to be "fellow-workers" with God.

Above all, what is needed (and this is the main burden of this essay) is the honest and thorough-going revision of our scale of spiritual values. So many of our estimates are conventional; our judgment upon certain classes of sins, for example, is often quite other than that of Christ. Proposals for reunion require for their due consideration a careful exploration of the kind of background which has been indicated—the background of God, of the activity of His Spirit, of the mind and teaching of Jesus. Let us try to be as dispassionate as possible, avoiding littleness and one-sidedness. We cannot entirely divest ourselves of our prejudices and preferences: too much is at stake for that. But we can at any rate do this: we can lay all our hopes and fears, our beliefs and disbeliefs, before God, praying Him to give us a clear vision of His purpose. "In thy light shall we see light."

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